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**THESE YOUNG REBELS**

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**FRANCES R. STERRETT**

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**THESE YOUNG REBELS**  
**FRANCES R. STERRETT**

By  
**FRANCES R. STERRETT**

**These Young Rebels**  
**Nancy Goes to Town**  
**Rebecca's Promise**  
**Jimmie the Sixth**  
**William and Williamina**  
**Mary Rose of Mifflin**  
**Up the Road with Sallie**  
**The Jam Girl**

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"IF I HAD MY WAY I'D SEND THEM ALL HOME UNTIL THEY LEARN HOW  
TO BEHAVE!"

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4/9/27 H.B.

# THESE YOUNG REBELS

BY  
FRANCES R. STERRETT

AUTHOR OF "NANCY GOES TO TOWN," "UP THE ROAD  
WITH SALLIE," "JIMMIE THE SIXTH," "MARY ROSE OF  
MIFFLIN," "THE JAM GIRL," ETC.

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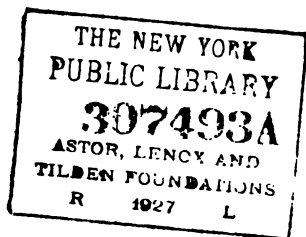


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OVER  
THE  
WORLD

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

TO  
MATILDA STERRETT MITCHELL  
WHO HAS FAITH IN  
"THESE YOUNG REBELS"



# THESE YOUNG REBELS

## I

"I SHAN'T!" exclaimed Kitty Forsythe, and she stamped her foot in its smart satin slipper.

"You shall!" declared Uncle Albert, and he pressed his thin, purple lips tighter together and thrust his jaw forward to let Kitty see how firm and determined it was. Uncle Albert knew that there was not a jaw in all Waloo which was any firmer or any more determined than his jaw. It would be very well for Kitty to look at it.

Old Uncle Albert Galusha had little admiration and little use for the young people of his family, and his young people had no admiration and no use for him. He maintained that they lived just to annoy and perplex him, and he called some of them empty-headed rebels and the rest of them dangerous radicals. They agreed in considering him a useless old man, the sort of old man who, if he could, would stand in the way of the world to block its triumphant progress. He never missed one opportunity to express his disapproval and disgust for young people who talked too much and did too little.

"It's hard work this country needs, not tongue clack," he would snort scornfully. "The Galushas may have been poor and unknown, but I never heard of a

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fool in the family until this younger generation grew up to act like fools!"

There were five of these foolish, irresponsible, young people, the grandchildren of Uncle Albert's brothers and sisters, for Uncle Albert had never married and had young people of his own to make him wise and patient. He had too many worth-while things to do, he would explain, and sometimes he would add tartly: "I suppose the Lord knew what He was about when He stole a rib from Adam and put women into the world, but often He must have wished that He hadn't done it. I don't deny that women have their use, and the man who wants to bother with them is welcome. I have other things on my mind."

He had never had much to do with his young people but find fault with them. He did send them an occasional check for which he usually asked an accounting for the business training the making out of the account gave them. And he did send through college those who wanted to go, although he considered later that college had taken a base advantage of his patronage by turning the simple-minded young things he had intrusted to it into wild theorists whose views made his blood run cold when he listened to them, which he never did if he could help it.

"Of course they got their fool notions in college!" he would insist indignantly. "I never had any such crazy ideas, and I never went to college. I left school when I was fourteen years old," proudly, "and I've been a business man ever since. But I didn't make my money sitting around telling the other fellow how his business should be run. No, sir, I worked! And I didn't stop at the end of eight hours, either!" Uncle Albert was positive that he could name a cure for all

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the ills from which the world was suffering. Indeed, he did prescribe it on every possible occasion, but the world, like many a doctor's patients, refused to take the medicine. Uncle Albert made a last effort to give his young people a dose which would cure them when he invited them to dine with him one evening in February.

Some five years before, Uncle Albert had built a huge marble mansion on the River Drive and filled it full of the rare and costly treasures he had been collecting, for he believed that a man who has a fortune should spend a fortune. He hated a miser. And how was the trade of the world to be carried on if money was not spent? So he had an art gallery in which were many pictures by the Italian primitives and the Renaissance masters. The little gallery did not hold the best work of Giotto, or of Botticelli, or of Franz Hals, but it did contain very good examples of Giotto and Titian and the rest, and the examples had cost Uncle Albert more money than any one would believe.

In the Galusha library there was a very valuable collection of books and maps and papers and pictures relating to the history of the state, and on the walls were portraits of the state's great men, among whom hung old Albert Galusha himself. His portrait showed him to be rather small and insignificant, but the world has never been dominated by inches. Albert Galusha had been a power in his state ever since he came to it as a young Indian trader whether his portrait said he had or not.

Attached to his art gallery was a smaller room devoted to the Indians who had unwittingly been the foundation of his fortune. Pictures of the old chiefs, beaded trappings, porcupine-embroidered deerskins, gorgeous feathered war bonnets, birch-bark baskets,

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stone pipes and axes told a vivid story of aboriginal life.

On the other side of the great hall was the spacious living room full of rare porcelains and jades and richly colored rugs. At the further end, up two shallow steps, was the music room with its grand piano and several quaint old instruments, the grandmother and great-grandmother, perhaps, of the polished grand piano.

Almost every article in the big house was a museum piece. Waloo had never taken old Mr. Galusha's collection of anything seriously and had laughed at his "old junk" until a European authority, who could not be laughed at, came all the way to Waloo to see a recently purchased picture, and astonished and stunned the proud president of the Waloo First National Bank by remarking that he would rather own Mr. Galusha's new Rembrandt than the recently built twelve-story bank building and all the bank stock, if he could have his choice. He actually believed that the picture had a greater money value.

The five young people who were to carry on the Galusha torch sniffed when they received their Uncle Albert's invitation, and some of them were in two minds whether to accept it. An evening with old Uncle Albert promised nothing but continuous argument, and there were other places where more amusing diversion could be obtained.

Perhaps Kitty Forsythe sniffed the loudest. Kitty was the granddaughter of Uncle Albert's youngest sister and his special despair, for, as he told her with blunt frankness, he had absolutely no use for young women who had ideas on politics and self-expression and birth rates and marriage, matters which could

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safely and decently be left with the sex which had taken care of them since the beginning of the world. Kitty was an active worker in the League of Women Voters, and she prided herself on being up to the very last moment in her views. She had soft, pretty, black hair which was not always pinned as becomingly as it could have been, and she had big blue eyes which were sometimes black and sometimes purple. Her nose was tilted just a bit at the end, and her mouth belonged far more to a woman than it ever did to a politician. Kitty was small and slim, and she had a skin like a rose leaf and a voice which made most people see what she saw, all but Uncle Albert, who invariably exclaimed "Black!" when Kitty said white was on the screen. Kitty would far rather have gone to a meeting of employed girls and talked to them of the greatest gift which was ever given to American women, the vote, than to old Uncle Albert's to be told that she made Uncle Albert sick, positively sick. But even as she took the telephone receiver in her hand to tell Uncle Albert that she was sorry but she could not neglect her work, she remembered how lonely Uncle Albert must be in his big marble mansion with nothing but collections and servants for company, and she gave herself a big surprise by saying meekly that she would try and be on time for dinner.

Another of Uncle Albert's young people who sniffed with scorn was young Albert Galusha the Second, the grandson of Uncle Albert's youngest brother, who was a socialist of so inflammable a nature that Uncle Albert told him to his face, more than once, that he was a menace to the country. "A damned menace!" was really the way Uncle Albert expressed it. Bert was the secretary of his local and a member of



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the staff of the *Beacon*, the socialist paper which Uncle Albert would not have in his house for a moment, although Bert sent it to him every week. Bert had married while he was still in college, another thing which his uncle disapproved, for Uncle Albert insisted that a man should be educated before he was married. Pretty little Marjorie, who had been so much more rabid than Bert, so advanced that she was afraid that a marriage ceremony was a social fetter, died two years later and left Bert with the memory of a radiant flamelike young creature who had made a heaven out of a sordid old world and who had given him twins, a boy and a girl.

"Twins? God bless my soul!" exclaimed Uncle Albert when he heard the news. "Just what you might expect. If the boy had a grain of sense left in his addled head he would give me the babies and let me have them brought up as Christians and Galushas. If he keeps them he'll only make two more firebrands out of them, and they'll die in jail or worse!"

But Bert refused to give his babies to any one, and he grew so much of a firebrand himself that it really was a wonder that he did not burn himself up.

Sybil Molyneaux did not sniff when she received her invitation. She jumped up and tossed back her bobbed hair and danced gleefully.

"I'll have one honest-to-goodness dinner this week!" she exclaimed before she frowned when she remembered what she would have to pay for an honest-to-goodness dinner. "I hope old Uncle Albert won't make himself too disagreeable. Just because he was born in a little country town is no reason why I should stay in a little country town all of my life. I guess Uncle Albert didn't stay where he was born! If he

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e never would have made more money than he  
ount!"

oil was an art student, so much of an art student  
she had bobbed her hair and wore smocks and  
ls, and, to quote Uncle Albert again, "made a  
fool of herself." The bobbed hair was the color  
pulled taffy, and the eyes which looked so trust-  
from beneath the modish eyebrows were violet,  
he lips which so often pouted were red as a lip-  
would make them, and the heart-shaped little  
usually wore a wistful expression, for Sybil was  
seur from her bobbed hair to her sandal strap.  
id not care a copper penny about art. How could  
when all of her study only enabled her to paint  
shades and to draw fashion sketches for the Big  
advertisements? But she talked a lot about her  
uncle, "Mr. Albert Galusha, you know," and she  
ed at his Giotto's and Titians. She jumped up  
down when she was invited to dine with Uncle  
rt, and she wondered hopefully if Uncle Albert  
d have whopping big checks for name cards as  
ad just heard some millionaire had had for a  
y dinner.

Of course I know name cards aren't used at this  
of a dinner," she told Juliet Parmalee, who shared  
one room and bath." "But Uncle Albert means  
thing. He never before asked all of us unless it  
for Thanksgiving or Christmas."

Another of Uncle Albert's young people was Vernon  
ghan, who played the 'cello in the Waloo String  
tet, and who gave you the impression that he  
stocks and lace ruffles and satin knee breeches  
buckled shoes. Any young woman who heard the  
oo String Quartet promptly fell in love with the

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'cellist, there was such an atmosphere of romance, of poetry about him. Uncle Albert had his own opinion of a healthy young man who earned his living by playing an overgrown fiddle, and he did not keep it to himself. He gave it to Vernon whenever he saw him, which was no oftener than Vernon could help. Vernon would never have gone to the dinner if Uncle Albert had not written that if Vernon refused he would hire the quartet and keep the other members playing trios in the music room while he talked to Vernon. For half a cent Vernon would have let Uncle Albert hire the quartet, but sober second thought advised him to write a pretty note to Uncle Albert and tell him that he was always at his service.

The fifth and last of old Albert Galusha's unsatisfactory young relatives was George Sinclair, an appetite disguised as a schoolboy, and Uncle Albert was not sorry when the head master wrote that in his opinion it would be most unwise to take George from school to dine with his uncle. If Mr. Galusha insisted, it could, of course, be arranged, but he hoped that Mr. Galusha would not insist. And Mr. Galusha did not insist.

Four of these young people lived alone or with other young people who shared their views and their bills, and were so feverishly eager to help right the wrongs of the world or to snatch a larger share of pleasure that they seldom remembered that they had ever had homes or belonged to families. Homes and families were regarded by them as shackles, and they much preferred the independence of a room and bath, meals at a cafeteria and their unhampered freedom.

But old Uncle Albert was not satisfied, and so one day, early in February, he invited them to dinner. Uncle Albert may have believed with Dr. Darwin that

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a man is a fool who never tried an experiment in his life.

"Underneath their tomfool notions they must have some decent instincts," he told himself. "After all they are Galushas, and if they won't live in a decent fashion for themselves perhaps they will do it for each other."

## II

UNCLE ALBERT looked around his table on the night in early February and wondered if any man ever had a more hopeless group of young relatives. And the young relatives glanced down to the end of the table where Uncle Albert was enthroned and were positive that no young people ever had such a queer old great-uncle.

Conversation was rather spasmodic and stilted, for certain subjects were banned under Uncle Albert's roof. Kitty could not so much as mention woman suffrage in her Uncle Albert's house. Bert was not allowed to speak of socialism. Sybil had to keep her views on art to herself, and if Vernon ventured to talk of music Uncle Albert would frown blackly and mutter unpleasant things about loafers. And in these days when you have extracted politics, socialism, music and art from the conversation you have very little left but the weather. And a further check to careless chatter was the question which burned in each young relative's mind—what on earth—or the dickens—does Uncle Albert want now? There was a question in Uncle Albert's bald head also, and it ran something like this: "What will the young fools"—fools was a favorite word with old Mr. Galusha—"say when they hear my plan?"

They made the most of the weather as they journeyed from soup to ice cream, and fortunately the weather that February was worth talking about, crisp and cold and clear, but every one, host and guests, was

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rather relieved when the move was made to the living room and coffee. All but Sybil and Bert, the socialist, took their coffee black, but Sybil had to have sugar, oh, a lot of sugar, and Bert wanted a lot of cream, facts which caused a little ripple of amused comment, and then Uncle Albert cleared his throat.

"Ahem!" he said. It was like a trumpet call to attention. "Ahem!"

They turned to him quickly. Far more than he wanted to tell did they want to hear. Kitty stole a glance at the watch on her wrist and thought that if he went right along with whatever he had to say she could drop in for a few moments at the school for voters which the league had opened in Little Europe, and which was Kitty's special pride.

"You can't expect these women from every country in Europe to care very much about America unless they know something about America," she would say, and her eyes would shine blackly and her cheeks would flush pinkly, and whoever was listening to her would think how pretty she was and agree with her whether he meant to or not.

"Ahem!" repeated Uncle Albert, somewhat at a loss what to say now that he had his young people, as queer a group as ever annoyed an old man, in front of him. He had taken the big armchair which once had been the property of William the Silent, but the great Hollander must have filled it better than old Mr. Galusha did. There was room for two when Uncle Albert sat in it. "I expect you have been wondering why I asked you to come here this evening," he began slowly. "You all know how much I disapprove of what you are doing. I can't think that it is a girl's place to make political speeches nor leave her home to cut her hair

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and paint lamp shades. And I don't think a man should try to tear down what his ancestors spent their lives to build up. And I don't believe that men, real men, would waste good working days on playing a fiddle. You know how bad I think all that is, but what I regard as even worse, as a real menace to the country, is your effort to do away with homes. I read only yesterday that last year there were over a million weddings in the United States and from that number only seventy thousand—seventy thousand!—homes were established. That's a deplorable, a dangerous situation. We have got to have homes in which to raise families. Not one of you, not even Bert with his little children, lives in a home or wants to live in a home. You have a room somewhere, but you only use it to sleep in. Vernon, here, plays his 'cello," it sounded as if Vernon played the zany to hear Uncle Albert, "in the room where he sleeps. Such a disgusting thing to do! A studio, he calls it, with the bed masquerading as a couch. Bert puts his twins in a public nursery. God knows what substitute Kitty has in that suffrage settlement in Little Europe. If you had your way you would do away with the home altogether, although it is the foundation, the bulwark, of the country. All thinking men agree with me. But you don't think so. You want to be anywhere but in a home with its safe refining influence, its love and protection. Your father was a fool, Sybil, to let you leave the home he made for you to come here and waste your time over art which means nothing to you but excitement and license. If you haven't wit enough to want a home for yourself, Bert, you owe your children one. What with school and college and the crazy ideas you have picked up, none of you has had much experi-

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ence with a home since you were a child. I regard that as most unfortunate, a grave mistake. I cannot tell you how grieved and disappointed I have been at the manner in which you have entered upon your duties as men and women." Uncle Albert had never known that in the days when Athens ruled the world her young men were required to take an oath to leave the city greater than they found it, but he felt that was what all young people should do, the young men and the young women, too, and he told his guests so. "But you know all this, know it as well as I do. I have told you often enough. Now I am going to make one last effort to convince you that some old-fashioned common sense is as necessary to the world as all of your new-fangled theories. This hectic feverish life you lead is all wrong! You need a home, and I am determined that you shall have another chance to learn to love and appreciate one!"

He stopped for breath, and Kitty had to stuff her handkerchief into her mouth to keep from laughing. Really, Uncle Albert was a scream with his archaic ideas. He should have lived a hundred years ago instead of in this progressive day when conditions change every twenty-four hours. She looked at Bert, who had withdrawn himself a little from the group and was frowning fiercely at Uncle Albert's latest purchase, a great jade Buddha, who refused to be intimidated by Bert's fierce frown and beamed benevolence and good will. Sybil turned an indignant pink when she was told what art meant to her, but she held her tongue. She had discovered long ago how useless it was to argue with Uncle Albert. It was much better to let him empty his mind and then do as you please. Vernon watched the flicker of the birch logs in the big fireplace



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which once had adorned a Florentine palace and wondered if a good dinner was worth such an harangue. Uncle Albert should hire a hall when he wanted to deliver a lecture on the dangers of the present and the glories of the past.

"I have thought about this for some time," went on Uncle Albert, full of his noble determination, "for I feel that I owe a duty not only to my family but to my country. And if I can show you that you are wrong in this matter of a home perhaps you may see that you are wrong in other things. Just at present you are wild young rebels. You want to tear to pieces a world that it has taken thousands of years to bring near perfection——"

That was more than Kitty could hear and hold her tongue. "Perfection!—With that awful war!" she interrupted indignantly.

"And with tyranny and oppression everywhere!" Bert's eyes flashed.

Uncle Albert frowned. He did not like to be interrupted, and these young people scarcely ever let a man finish a sentence, but perhaps he had said a word too much. He admitted it handsomely. They could take a lesson from him. "Well, maybe I shouldn't have said the world was perfect, but it is a very good world, too good to be blown up by red radicals or torn to pieces by impractical women. It at least represents a lot of conscientious endeavor on the part of thousands of honest right-thinking men. But I am not going to be diverted from what I was saying!" He glared at them. "I have thought of this for some time, as I said. I've tried asking you to live like ladies and gentlemen, and you won't do it. I've tried bribing you, and it wasn't any use. Now"—he hesitated a

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second, and they held their breath to hear what old Uncle Albert was going to do now—"Now, I'm going to buy you!"

"Why, Uncle Albert Galusha!" Kitty was pink to her ears. The idea! As if she were for sale.

Uncle Albert went on to state the terms of his purchase as if he had never heard her indignant exclamation.

"If you will all live here with me for a year and let me show you what a home can be, I shall give each of you a hundred thousand dollars."

For sixty seconds there was an ominous silence. Then Bert's lip curled.

"Do you call this a home?" And he looked around the big living room which really was more like a museum than it was like a home.

"It's my home!" snapped Uncle Albert.

"I should love to, Uncle Albert," Kitty began hurriedly, for she did not want any time wasted in argument, that never got them anywhere. "But I have my work. I know you hate it, but you'd hate it worse to have me do it from your home." And she smiled at him to show that she bore him no malice for his hatred of her work. So long as she believed that she was entitled to her opinions she had to think that Uncle Albert had a right to his views.

"And my 'cello!" How could Vernon ever play any instrument under Uncle Albert's disapproving eyes?

"Uncle Albert!" Sybil's eyes sparkled, and she ran to take Uncle Albert's hand and squeeze it. What couldn't she do with a hundred thousand dollars!

Uncle Albert gave her back her fingers without squeezing them. He would rather interest Bert and Kitty in his plan than feather-headed Sybil, although

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all of them had to be interested in it to have it succeed.

"It is only for a year," he explained helpfully.

"A year!" cried Kitty. "A lifetime!"

"When you are as old as I am, Kitty," Uncle Albert spoke more gently, "you will learn that a year is a very small part of a man's life."

"I wonder," murmured Kitty, her head on one side, her red lips parted, as she regarded Uncle Albert and tried to imagine an age when a year would be considered a small part of a life. Why, a year held three hundred and sixty-five complete days!

"I don't approve at all of what you are doing," went on Uncle Albert unpleasantly. "I don't think Kitty and Sybil are doing women's work, what the Lord intended them to do. They seem ignorant of the meaning of the word gentlewomen. And I know that you boys are worse than wasting your time. And that brings me to another part of my plan. During the year you are to be with me you are to live like normal human beings. Wait a minute!" as they burst into a chorus of indignant protest. "Wait until I tell you what I mean! Kitty and Sybil will do the things that young gentlewomen have always done, learn to be gracious hostesses and good home makers. They will go to a cooking school and study how to make a family happy and comfortable."

"My word!" exclaimed Kitty, her eyes saucer big as she stared at Uncle Albert. "I wonder if they will!"

"And you boys," Uncle Albert went on cheerfully, "will go down town with me and learn what an honest day's work is, a man's work."

"I shan't work in any millionaire's office!" declared Bert, while Vernon protested that he had one profession. Why should he learn another?

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"Why won't you work in my office?" Uncle Albert bristled indignantly at Bert. His office was good enough for any man to work in.

"If I should accept your crazy plan, which I shan't, not for a moment, I should go into your factory and learn where you steal all this luxury." Bert looked at the jade and the porcelains and the rugs which glowed like spilled jewels, and he laughed. He was that rare creature, a socialist with an occasional sense of humor. "You couldn't shake my belief, Uncle Albert, but I bet I could make yours totter. It might be worth trying," he looked at Uncle Albert with speculative interest, "if I didn't have my job on the *Beacon*."

"A hundred thousand dollars for each of you!" Uncle Albert dangled it before them temptingly.

"My work means more to me than a million dollars!" Some of the indignation which colored Kitty's cheeks was in her voice.

"Really, Uncle Albert," began Vernon with a snap in his black eyes and a snap in his voice, but Uncle Albert would not let him finish. Uncle Albert had invited them to hear him, not to listen to them.

"This offer is made to you collectively, not individually," he explained again. "That means if Bert"—Bert snorted contemptuously—"and Sybil agree, their consent is useless unless Kitty and Vernon agree, too. We don't have to consider George. I shall bring him home from school without asking any questions. I consider a home far better for a boy than the best school in the country. So, Kitty, if you refuse, you give up your own chance of obtaining a fortune, and you rob your cousins of their chance. A hundred thousand dollars is quite a bit of money," he reminded them as they stared at him. "I should hate to rob any one of

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it." He paid no attention to Bert's indignant exclamation and went on: "It is only for a year, a few months, so that you may know what you are throwing away. At the end of the year if you find that you don't agree with me that there are more important things in the world than reform and revolt and nonsense, you can each of you take your hundred thousand dollars and throw it away so far as I am concerned. I have done my duty."

They never said a word. Their thoughts were in a turmoil. A hundred thousand dollars without any string tied to it would buy a lot of reform and revolt and nonsense.

"This isn't to be any contest," continued Uncle Albert, determined to make his proposition as clear as spring water. "It doesn't mean that the one who is most appreciative and helpful in the home will receive a large legacy when I die. I have arranged for all that. This house and its contents will be given to Waloo, to be known as the Galusha Museum. No, it's not restitution, Bert! It's a gift. I don't owe Waloo anything. My money will establish a home where the orphan children of Waloo will be brought up in the old-fashioned way with some respect for law and order and work. And I plan to use the place at Lake Kampeska as a vacation home for mothers with little children they want raised in the right way. I have it all arranged so that each of you will get a hundred thousand dollars and not a penny more. And you have to earn the hundred thousand. I agree with Bert that a large fortune cripples a young person. A hundred thousand will give you enough to show what you can do."

"But my work," repeated Kitty, for her work—her

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way, Uncle Albert called it—was the most important thing in the world to Kitty. "Even if I should consider your offer, which I couldn't, not for a moment, Uncle Albert, although it is dear of you to bother about us," she said politely, although she did not consider it dear at all—she considered it officious. "I really couldn't. I have a regular job with the League of Women Voters, you know. I couldn't give that up!" And she might as well have added that she wouldn't give it up to come and live in Uncle Albert's marble mansion, for that was what she meant and what Uncle Albert knew she meant.

"Of course!" exclaimed Bert, who had been so disgusted at this effort of capital to buy people, like cabbages from a cart, that he had been incapable of speech. "We all have our work!"

"That," remarked Uncle Albert with great deliberation, "brings me to the last part of my plan. I have offered the League of Women Voters, Kitty, a check for ten thousand dollars to be used as the league pleases if it will dispense with your services for a year!"

"Ten thousand dollars!" repeated Kitty, who knew very well what ten thousand dollars would do for the league.

"And I have offered the same sum to Bert's disreputable *Beacon*, although I never expected to give a penny to such a dangerous paper. I know your *Beacon* is hard up for funds, Bert. It can't afford to refuse ten thousand dollars. And the same sum will recompense Vernon's quartet for the loss of its 'cello. Sybil works for herself and doesn't need to be bought off."

"The league would rather have my services than any amount of money!" declared Kitty furiously.

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"We shall see." Uncle Albert spoke gently, and his faded eyes wandered from one of his young relatives to another. "Of course you can't realize what I am doing, upsetting all my well-ordered, quiet, decent life to save you from this loose freedom which is such a menace. It won't be any harder for you than it is for me, but I feel that something must be done. I want you to have another chance to see things as they really are, not as you, with your half-baked theories, think they are. And I'm willing to pay a big price to show you; more than you are worth. I've made the offer to your league, Kitty. Its decision may help you to decide. And now that you have heard what I had to say shall we talk of something else? Perhaps you would like to see the latest addition to my state collection? A real Red River cart! You've seen them perhaps in parades, the two-wheeled carts which served as transports? Everything that went north or west of the Mississippi was carried in a Red River cart. Lord, the number of miles I've traveled in them, to trade with the Indians, to consult with Donald Smith of the Hudson Bay Company, to jack up the traders, put new heart in the settlers. There's history and romance in those old wheels, but I suppose you young people with your minds on automobiles and aëroplanes can't see anything but a clumsy, uncomfortable old cart."

They could not even see the cart just then. Other pictures, horrible visions, filled their minds.

"Uncle Albert," began Kitty stormily.

Uncle Albert shook his head. "No, Kitty," he said firmly, for long, long ago he had learned that it seldom did a plan much good to argue over it after it was presented. "The matter is closed now. I have made my offer and you can take a week to consider it. But

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I shall not argue nor explain. I have made it perfectly clear, and you can decide for yourselves."

"Oh, can we!" murmured Kitty rebelliously, for how could she decide for herself when Uncle Albert had bribed the league?

"You will be a perfect thief, Kitty Forsythe, if you keep us from getting all that money!" Sybil exclaimed quickly. "A hundred thousand dollars! Just think of it! I'll never speak to you again if you don't tell Uncle Albert right now what a generous old dear he is!"

"What do you think, Bert?" Kitty turned away from Sybil to question the cousin with whom she was most in sympathy.

"I think Uncle Albert is right, we are sold and bought," he told her bitterly. "You aren't worth ten thousand dollars to your league, Kit, and the *Beacon* would sell its whole staff for ten thousand. We might as well admit the truth. Uncle Albert has bought us, all right."

"He hasn't bought me!" insisted Kitty. "And the league does think I'm invaluable. Mrs. Bagehot said so this very day."

"Invaluable doesn't mean that you are worth ten thousand dollars," Bert suggested. "That will be the acid test."

"Aren't you coming, Kitty?" Uncle Albert called from the doorway. "I don't want you to talk to Bert now. I hope with all my heart you will consent to my little arrangement, my dear," he said in a really kind voice. "We shall have fine times together. Real home times among ourselves and parties for you girls. The boys will have an opportunity to meet the men who are trying to build up, not tear down. You shall



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be like my own children, and if at the end of the year there should be any weddings——” he beamed benevolently, for, in spite of the horrible statement he had read, weddings to Uncle Albert meant new homes established.

“I shall never marry!” declared Kitty.

“We won’t argue that now,” soothed Uncle Albert. “Doesn’t my plan sound at all pleasant to you?” he asked wistfully.

“It sounds like jail!” Kitty drew a long breath. “I don’t want to be a copy of you, Uncle Albert. I want to be myself, Kitty Forsythe. I’m sorry I can’t accept your offer, but I can’t! And you wouldn’t be mean enough to rob the others because I can’t. That would be beastly. But you see—you do see, don’t you,” coaxingly, “that I must keep my own individuality?”

“I see that you are very selfish. But I don’t want your answer to-night, Kitty. I don’t want it until next week. And it must be all of you, not two or three. I take Patrick Henry’s advice—United we will make this last effort. Divided it won’t do. But I think you will join us,” he prophesied with a smile.

“I shan’t!” And it was then that Kitty Forsythe stamped her foot in its satin slipper.

### III

KITTY FORSYTHE's blue eyes popped wide open. So did her mouth, and she stared at Mrs. Bagehot as if she thought her two pink ears had lied to her. Surely Mrs. Bagehot had never said what Kitty's two pink ears told Kitty she had.

"You think I should accept Uncle Albert's crazy idea?" Kitty could not believe that Mrs. Bagehot would mean anything so terrible.

Mrs. Bagehot put her plump white hand on Kitty's shoulder. "My dear," she said, and there was a firm note in her voice which made Kitty remember the Medes and Persians, and adamant, and other firm things. "Just think what it will mean to the league if you do. Ten thousand dollars! Do you know of any other way by which we could get half of ten thousand dollars? And we do need money. We can't afford to keep your school for women voters open unless we get funds somewhere. And these rooms! They are horribly expensive." She looked around the big sunny suite, the headquarters for the Waloo League of Women Voters, and shook her head. "I used to wonder why men spent such huge sums in politics, but now I know. We shall miss you, my dear," she added affectionately. "You have done splendid work, but just now— Really, Kitty, the best work you can do for the league now is to accept Mr. Galusha's offer and let us have that ten thousand dollars."

Kitty's face lost all of its pretty color, and her heart stopped beating when she was told in such very plain

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terms that she was not as desirable to the league as ten thousand dollars. She swallowed a lump in her throat and tried to keep her voice steady as she said: "It doesn't seem quite fair, does it, that some one quite outside of your life can meddle with your affairs so that you must do what you hate? I don't want a penny of Uncle Albert's old money! I just want to live my own life and do the work I love. And I've been so happy here! I don't see how I can give up my work and learn to sew and cook!" Her lip quivered piteously, and there were tears in her eyes as she looked pleadingly at Mrs. Bagehot in the hope that Mrs. Bagehot would relent and say of course Kitty was worth far more than any number of paltry dollars to any organization.

But Mrs. Bagehot never showed one symptom of relenting. She took a couple of letters in her hand and looked at them instead of at Kitty's quivering lip and tear-filled eyes.

"It is only for a year, not forever," she reminded Kitty with a reassuring pat on Kitty's ink-stained fingers. "At the end of twelve months you may come back. And you will have earned a hundred thousand dollars for yourself and ten thousand dollars for us. Not many girls have such an opportunity to earn a fortune by spending just twelve months. Really, I think your uncle is very generous. He is old-fashioned and conservative. He never wanted you to work for suffrage, I remember, and yet here he has offered a suffrage organization a large sum and a suffrage worker a fortune if she will only retire from active work for a year. Just one year! Yes, I do think that old Mr. Galusha is very broad-minded and generous when you consider his prejudices."

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"But I have to live in the Galusha house!" wailed Kitty, who could not see that Uncle Albert had been broad-minded and generous, although it was very plain to her that he was prejudiced, and that he wanted his own way bad enough to buy it.

Mrs. Bagehot laughed. "Kitty, don't tell me it will be any hardship to exchange your dingy room at the settlement for a suite in the big Galusha mansion, for I shan't believe you."

"And the people I have to live with!" moaned Kitty.

Mrs. Bagehot stopped laughing to frown. "I have always thought that you were more sensible than most girls, Kitty Forsythe," she said in her presidential voice, "but really I can't understand your attitude now. You should be grateful to your uncle instead of wailing over a few simple conditions. Everything in this world has to be paid for, and if you ask me I think the price you are asked to pay is very small for what you will get."

Kitty shook her sleek black head, and her voice was as firm as her president's. "I don't see it that way at all! And I don't believe I ever will, not if you talk until doomsday!"

The unreasonableness of young women who will not take the word of an older and wiser person but insist on using their own judgment made Mrs. Bagehot sigh. "Then look at it this way, my dear," she suggested brightly. "Every cause has to have its sacrifices, its martyrs. Don't you care enough for the league to give it a year, one little year, out of your life?"

Kitty's face flamed and her eyes blazed. "I want to give it all the years of my life!" she cried passionately. "That is just the trouble. I don't want to rob the league of twelve months' faithful service!"

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"You wouldn't rob it if you were the means of adding ten thousand dollars to the treasury. That's a lot of money, Kitty Forsythe! It would mean keeping on with the school in Little Europe, taking these rooms for another year instead of moving into smaller quarters. We could do more field work. We must do more field work, organize the women on the farms as well as in the small towns if we are going to fight the Non-Partisans. We can't do it without money. Is there any other way by which you could give us ten thousand dollars?" she asked frankly.

The color in Kitty's face stung at such a very plain question. Kitty could not have furnished ten thousand cents at that particular moment, and Mrs. Bagehot knew it.

"It may sound brutal," went on Mrs. Bagehot with a firm determination to show Kitty the situation as it really was, "but if you can give us this money and won't do it, you are just the same as taking ten thousand dollars from us."

"Mrs. Bagehot!" Kitty lifted her head high and stared at her president with indignant, angry eyes.

"We shall miss you!" Mrs. Bagehot's voice grew soft and purring, for there was no use in pounding on a nail when it had been driven home. "You have been one of our splendid, enthusiastic workers. And next year when you come back to us you will be more enthusiastic," she promised.

Kitty interrupted her. Kitty's eyes were like two coals, a red spot burned in each cheek, and her voice shook as she tried to speak with a dignity which would scorch Mrs. Bagehot and make her realize what a shameful thing she was doing.

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"Then I am to understand that you care more for money than you do for me and my work?"

Mrs. Bagehot shrugged her shoulders. Why would the child take the affair so seriously and make it so personal? Of course money was of more value. It was easy to obtain workers, but the finance committee had been at its wits' end to find money. If Kitty was not so selfishly blind she would see that. Kitty knew very well how hampered the league was by its empty treasury. But there was nothing to be gained by beating about the bush and so she answered Kitty quite honestly.

"Yes, my dear, I do. Just at present, any way. I should be glad to loan every woman in the league to Mr. Galusha at ten thousand dollars apiece!"

It did not ease the ache in Kitty's heart and the stab to her pride to hear that there was no one in the league who was worth ten thousand dollars to it. She drew a deep breath which was almost a sob before she threw back her head and looked down at her president. The flame had died out of her eyes and in its place was a cold contempt which Mrs. Bagehot wisely refused to see.

"All right." There was a skim of ice over Kitty's voice. "You have the privilege of choosing your workers. Uncle Albert said you would take the money, but I didn't believe him. I thought that there were some things which were worth more than money, loyalty and—and——" Her voice broke and she had to stop and swallow hard before she could exclaim hotly, "I shan't bother you any more!" She turned and walked to the door, head up, shoulders back, like a soldier.

"Kitty!" Mrs. Bagehot sprang to her feet and put

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out a detaining hand, but when Kitty refused to see it she shook her head and went back to her desk. Perhaps it was hard on the child, but truth was so often hard. And money was scarce. This was a crucial time. Ten thousand dollars might mean saving the state from the radicals. The condition Mr. Galusha had tied to his gift made it impossible to let Kitty continue her work, but she could come back to the league in a year. The league must do its best to make Kitty think that she was a heroine and a martyr. But how could the league make Kitty think anything if Kitty would not listen to it? Mrs. Bagehot frowned.

Angry tears were in Kitty's eyes, angry color in her cheeks, and angry thoughts in her head as she went hurriedly away from the big office building which housed the league. She was so angry, so indignant, and so hurt that she was perfectly oblivious to every one and every thing until she ran into a tall, slim, young man in very smart winter raiment who smiled radiantly when he felt the impact of her small self and saw who she was.

"Well, well!" he exclaimed, reaching for Kitty's right hand which hung at her side and which he shook heartily. "Welcome to our city! This is sure one big piece of all wool luck!"

"Hello, Arthur!" gulped Kitty, and she turned her face away from him until she could change its expression. She did not want all Waloo to see what an idiot she had been.

A blind man on a galloping horse could have known there was something wrong, and it was much more simple for two-eyed Arthur Parkyn to see that Kitty was in trouble. His face changed its expression, too. It lost its eager welcome and became anxious.

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"I say, Kitty, what's the trouble?" And he put his hand on her arm.

Kitty gulped again. "I've just been told that the league doesn't want me any longer. I've—I've been thrown out!" She flung back her head and tried to laugh scornfully at the big office building and its tenant, the League of Women Voters.

"No!" Arthur tried to look sympathetic and indignant, and he did very well considering how glad he was that the league had thrown Kitty out. Arthur was not in favor of girls in politics. Politics might be all very well for fat, gray-headed old women, but in his estimation a League of Women Voters was no place at all for pretty, black-haired, blue-eyed girls of twenty-two. "You don't mean——" he began in amazed surprise that anything so desirable should have happened. "I say, Kitty, what do you mean?" He might as well have the story straight.

She answered him with a question which only tangled the tale for him. "Do you think a prejudiced, selfish, dictatorial old man has any right to interfere with you?" she demanded fiercely. "A tyrannical old man who means absolutely nothing to you? Has he any right to bribe and buy until you can't do what you want to do?"

That sounded entirely too abstract to Arthur. He wanted the concrete. "What do you mean, Kitty? Put it in words of one syllable so a fellow with a limited amount of gray stuff can understand."

She shrugged her shoulders impatiently, but she did her best to explain how despicably old Uncle Albert Galusha had interfered with her work and meddled with her life and how Mrs. Bagehot had declared that



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the league would be very glad to exchange Kitty for ten thousand dollars.

"I thought she would refuse Uncle Albert's offer with scorn!" exclaimed Kitty, who could not understand why Mrs. Bagehot had been so lacking in scorn.

"Well, I'll be darned!" murmured Arthur when the whole hideous scheme was made clear to him. "Pretty clever of old Mr. Galusha, I'll say. No wonder he is a multi, if that is the way his old bean works. I'll bet Bert's *Beacon* sells him, too. And Vern's old quartet! Ten thousand dollars will look like a million to it. And Sybil Molyneaux! Old Mr. Galusha will get a complete family or I'm a goat! He's a wonder!"

"He's a selfish old tyrant!" corrected Kitty with subdued fury.

"Well, he never did like your job," excused Arthur, who understood perfectly why old Albert Galusha had disapproved of women in politics.

"You defend him because you agree with him!" accused Kitty.

Arthur flushed as if he were ashamed of sharing Uncle Albert Galusha's old-fashioned ideas, but he admitted that he did share them.

"I do. You can call me a remnant of the dark ages if you choose, but I don't approve of politics for women. I wish to thunder you didn't believe in them, either. If you didn't we would have been married months ago and your old Uncle Albert would have to leave you out of his happy family."

Kitty looked up quickly, speculatively. Would marriage leave her out of this horrible plan of Uncle Albert's? "I wonder," she began. "If I thought that I'd marry you to-day, Arthur Parkyn! But no, it's too late. And anyway I never would marry a man who

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didn't share my honest convictions. I couldn't be happy nor make him happy if we disagreed on the big vital questions. But we've gone over that a thousand times and there isn't anything to be gained by going over it again now when I'm so furious that I don't know what I'm talking about. I'm in such a rage at Mrs. Bagehot and the league that I'm almost ready to go back on all that means progress. When the women who stand at the head of the progressive movement tell you with their own lips that you aren't worth anything to the cause you'd like to give your life to, why—why it almost makes you think that you were mistaken in the bigness of the cause!"

There they were back where they had started. Arthur sighed and tried to be properly sympathetic.

"It's a rotten shame! But you know, Kitty dear, I've always told you that women were that way—little and catty. They can't get on the outside and look at things in the big, impersonal way—the way men do. That's why I'm against them in active politics. You see now that I'm right and it hurts. Of course it hurts. Perhaps now you'll agree with me and then——" He stopped and nodded to her with a world of meaning as he squeezed her hand.

She shook her head. Arthur Parkyn and his wish to marry her were an old story, while this plan of Uncle Albert's was new and dastardly. "I never should have believed that Mrs. Bagehot——" Her lips quivered. "I feel that the world I thought was so safe and stable and jolly is turned upside down and whizzing through space. I don't know what to cling to. If I ever do feel as you say, I may marry you, but I'm too hurt and angry to think of marrying any one now. Why, I've done wonderful work with the

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foreign women in Little Europe!" she told him with rising indignation. "I've taught them all they know of America. And Mrs. Bagehot had promised that I should go up on the Iron Range this winter and organize the Slavic and Bohemian women up there. She said I was a flame then, and now, now she wants to extinguish me!" She laughed bitterly. "I suppose she thinks I'll give the league a big part of that hundred thousand when I get it, but I shan't. I shan't give it a penny! All it will get will be the ten thousand Uncle Albert gives it for turning me out!" She bit her lip to keep the tears in her eyes.

Arthur sighed, too, but not because Kitty had been turned out of the league. For a brief moment he had hoped that Mrs. Bagehot had made Kitty so furious that she would throw away all of her radical views and consent to marry him at once. He had met Kitty at a dinner dance at the Country Club to which she had gone because Martha Farnsworth refused to join her committee unless she did. Kitty and Arthur had danced together all evening. It was a distinct shock to Arthur to hear later that the girl who had been the fluff of thistledown in his arms and who had stepped into his impressionable heart was one of Mrs. Bagehot's flying squadron. And Kitty had been stunned to learn that the man whose step suited her so perfectly was opposed to women in politics. She had not supposed that there was a man under thirty who was so archaic, and Arthur Parkyn was considerably under thirty.

"It's so stupid to object to women in politics," she told him scornfully when they stopped dancing to argue.

"It's so indecent to do anything else," he had re-

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torted, looking straight into her eyes. "I never saw eyes change color as yours do," he added irrelevantly. "They were blue and now they are black—like velvet."

She moved impatiently. "Fortunately it doesn't matter what you think, for we have suffrage, and stupid men like you can't take it from us."

"That's a great pity!" he returned coolly. "Did you hear what I said about your eyes?"

Indeed it was a pity, he thought, when Kitty told him she did not care a picayune what he thought of her eyes, and she did not care much more than a picayune what he thought of her opinions, for the views of a man of his avowedly old-fashioned ideas would not be worth even a picayune. Arthur looked at her sadly and wondered if perhaps he explained just how a man, an intelligent man, really felt about girls she would see how wrong she was. And Kitty thought how shameful it was that a man who was so up-to-date in his clothes should be so out-of-date in his views. Perhaps if she talked to him— And they had talked, morning, noon and night, at other dinner dances, at theaters, at lectures, at church, on the avenue, the river; in fact, wherever young people went Kitty Forsythe and Arthur Parkyn argued the questions on which they disagreed.

"I don't see how I can care for him," Kitty would tell Kitty Forsythe. "He isn't a bit my type. I don't approve of anything he says or thinks and yet I do like him better than any man I know. He's so funny!"

"It's fascination! that's what it is!" Arthur would tell Arthur Parkyn. "It can't be love—the right kind of love. I couldn't really love a girl with such advanced views."

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But he found that he could, and Kitty was afraid that she could, but Kitty would not marry him.

"Not until you think as I do about women," she said very, very firmly. "It would mean unhappiness and worse. I couldn't keep still on what means so much to me. And you couldn't keep still either, and we would argue and wrangle until we grew to hate each other. When I marry I mean to marry for keeps. I don't care much for this trial stuff. And it wouldn't be for keeps with a man who disagrees with me as you do. No, I like you a lot, but I couldn't think of marrying you. I don't think I shall marry any one for years and years. I have too many things to do."

Arthur remembered all this as he walked up the avenue with Kitty and was told again all about her talk with Mrs. Bagehot. Surely Kitty would not remain faithful to a cause which would sell her? And perhaps after she had been with old Mr. Galusha in the quiet, gentle influence of a home and surrounded by a happy family she might think as he did. It was so long since Kitty had had a real home and a family that she did not know what she was talking about when she called them shackles. She would learn. Uncle Albert Galusha was going to teach her. A little feeling of hope buoyed him up. But he did not tell Kitty of his hope. Time, he thought, will show her how faithful and appreciative and loving and right I am, and the contrast between her ungrateful league will show up her old feminists. She can't help but see it my way when she has been with old Mr. Galusha for a while. I'll just lie low and keep still.

So instead of following the old argument he went back to Uncle Albert and his plan which Kitty called perfectly ridiculous and awful.

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"Old Mr. Galusha must believe in himself. A hundred thousand dollars is quite a bit of money," he suggested, and she looked at him oddly and imagined that he regarded her with unusual interest. She had never thought that Arthur Parkyn was mercenary.

"Oh, money!" as if money were the dust beneath their feet, worth nothing, absolutely nothing at all. "I've done very well without money for twenty-two years, and I could get along very well without it for the rest of my life. Perhaps I shall refuse Uncle Albert's hundred thousand at the end of the year. What do you suppose he would say?" For the first time that afternoon she laughed heartily as she thought of Uncle Albert's surprise and then her face sobered. "What do you suppose the league would say if I should refuse to consider the plan at all? But I'm not petty enough to do that, to rob the league and Bert and Vern and Syb and George. I've got to think of them as well as of myself."

"Oh, well, a year isn't forever!" He sounded like Mrs. Bagehot.

"A year is twelve months," she insisted. "And a lot can happen in twelve months. Uncle Albert hopes that Syb and I will be married." She scornfully explained one thing which might happen. "He wants us to have homes of our own. I suppose he thinks if we are shut up with Bert and Vern we'll fall in love with them. It's as plain as the nose on your face. He is furious because we are independent and free and he thinks if we fall in love with Bert and Vern we'll give up our freedom and our independence for a home. Home!" She had only hot contempt for the word.

Arthur stopped suddenly to stare at her. "By

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George!" he exclaimed. "By George! I never thought of that!"

"You can think of it now, for it's exactly what a man like Uncle Albert would plan. But you needn't worry. That is one reason I am glad that I am so fond of you even if we are as far apart as the poles in our opinions. I can't very well fall in love with one of Uncle Albert's friends if I'm so fond of you, can I?"

"I hope not!" he exclaimed from the very bottom of his heart. "If I thought you could— If I thought you would, you shouldn't go! Not one step!"

Kitty laughed at him. "Oh, yes, I should," she told him quickly. "The League of Women Voters needs money. Oh, Arthur!" she exclaimed with a complete change of voice and face, "isn't this a horrid old world? Something is always bobbing up to make you do what you don't want to do. If Uncle Albert had left me alone I might have thought of him in a kindly way, but as it is—as it is, Arthur Parkyn, I just hate him for imagining for a moment that a year in his—his stultifying old home with his made-to-order family will make me anything but what I am—a working woman and a feminist!"

"And engaged to me!" Arthur added a plank to her platform.

"Not exactly engaged, Arthur," she corrected. "You know I couldn't be engaged to you unless I were going to marry you. We just have a sort of understanding that if the day ever comes when we think alike we might be engaged."

"It's the same as an engagement," insisted Arthur.

"Something the same," she admitted slowly.

"And whether your old Uncle Albert likes it or not I'm coming to see you."

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"Sure you are!" agreed Kitty, and suddenly her eyes twinkled. "We are to be in a home, you know. All our friends are to come to see us." She burst into a gale of laughter as if there was something very humorous in the thought of the home she was to be in and the friends who were coming to see her. "Oh! won't Uncle Albert wish he were dead before this year is over?" she asked Arthur, and she laughed again.



## IV

UNCLE ALBERT received the members of his new family with hearty cordiality. He was going to have his own way, and it was easy for him to be cordial.

Kitty Forsythe was the first to arrive. Kitty always did disagreeable things as soon as possible and then they were over. And as a visit to old Uncle Albert Galusha was about as disagreeable a thing as she could imagine, far, far worse than a visit to the dentist, she wanted it over just as soon as possible.

She turned up her nose at the big marble mansion when she dismissed her taxi and faced the door. "I shan't be influenced by you nor by anything that is in you," she told the gleaming façade defiantly, and the façade seemed to wink at her from all its shining windows and tell her that it did not blame her at all, that it felt exactly as she did about the home of which it had to be a part.

It was not the butler's fault that Kitty would have to be served by him for a year, so she answered his greeting with a smile which made him smile as much as a butler can smile and feel more comfortable about this strange idea of old Mr. Galusha of which he was not sure that he approved. No, Kitty kept all of her scorn for the beautiful, spacious hall and for her Uncle Albert, who came from the library with an eager greeting.

"Well, Kitty," he said as he took her hand, "I am glad to see you. I hope, my dear, that we are going to be very happy in our home."

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"Hope," remarked Kitty carelessly, "is an easy thing to do. Am I the first of your guests?"

"The first member of the family," corrected Uncle Albert quickly. "There will be no guests, my dear, just the members of what I trust and pray will be a happy family."

Kitty looked at him curiously. Did he honestly think that his experiment would produce a happy family? If it did he would prove himself the greatest manufacturer of families that ever was, she decided, as she followed him into the library with its portraits of great men, its crackling fire of birch logs, its walls lined with books which made a fascinating mosaic of reds and browns and blues and greens in the flickering firelight. It was a very pleasant room, and if one had nothing to do one might be very happy there, Kitty thought, as she listened to Uncle Albert. But she could never be happy in it, she had too much to do.

"I have been very fortunate in securing a lady to preside over our home," Uncle Albert was saying with a beaming smile.

"Help!" murmured Kitty to herself. "A chaperon at my age! What next?" But she looked politely at Uncle Albert and let him tell his story in his own way.

"A home without a sweet, refined woman at the head of it is not a home, at least it is not my idea of a home," Uncle Albert went on quite happily. There was no doubt that Uncle Albert was pleased with himself and what he had done. "And I was rather at a loss to know where to find just the right person. Then I thought of Sue Ellsworth. I don't suppose you remember her?" He looked at Kitty as if he hoped that she would remember Sue Ells-

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worth, but so far as she knew Kitty had never heard of Sue Ellsworth, so how could she say she had. It would be foolish to begin by telling Uncle Albert tarradiddles. Uncle Albert was disappointed, but he went cheerily on: "Your mother would remember her, I am sure. She is my cousin and quite a little younger than I am. She was a sweet, pretty, well-bred girl, thoroughly trained in all the old home arts and graces, and she grew into a wonderful woman, refined and gentle and considerate. I haven't seen her for twenty years, I suppose, for she stayed in the old home in Manitou. When I found I was going to have a family," he smiled at Kitty, who was trying nobly not to let him see how bored she was by his tale, "I thought Sue could help me choose a lady to be at the head of our home. I wrote to her and told her that I wanted a married lady, a widow, and that I had absolute confidence in her judgment. Her letter surprised me, for she wrote that she would like to come herself and that even if I insisted on a widow she could still fill the requirement, as she had lost her husband. I never heard that she was married but, as I said, I hadn't seen her for twenty years. She must have married a cousin, for her name is still Ellsworth. I was delighted, for I feel that I can trust you and Sybil to her. Her influence will be splendid, for she was brought up in the good old-fashioned way. I wanted her to be here to welcome you so that you would at once feel her motherly interest. First impressions are so important, and I always think a cordial welcome is such a necessary feature of a home. But Sue took a later train than I planned, and has just arrived. She went to her room, but you will meet her at dinner. I expect you would like to go to your room, too. I

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hope it will please you. Mrs. Merrill, the housekeeper, and I gave a great deal of thought to it."

Uncle Albert seemed full of hope that afternoon, and he moved fussily about, anxious to have Kitty pleased with the arrangements he had made for her. He took her himself up the broad marble stairway to the rooms which were to be hers for a year. They were very charming rooms, as charming as a girl could wish. Sitting room and bedroom were in ivory and rose with roses clambering over the chintz cushions and hangings. Kitty felt rather out of place in her shabby blue serge as she followed Uncle Albert while he showed her the mirror-lined dressing room and the white-tiled bathroom. The suite was such a contrast to the dingy room at the settlement that Kitty could not believe that it was to be hers, although Uncle Albert was saying that it was and that he hoped she would be happy and contented in it, and if there was anything she would like changed she was to tell him at once. He knew girls were rather particular about their rooms. There was no doubt that he had tried his best to please her. He was so much like a fussy, anxious parent that Kitty laughed a bit tremulously and even kissed his wrinkled cheek and told him the rooms were lovely. She had never imagined having such lovely rooms, not even in her wildest dreams.

"I hope it's homelike," Uncle Albert murmured, when he had stopped blushing at Kitty's impulsive kiss, and Kitty giggled to think how far from like her home it was. "You know, Kitty," went on Uncle Albert earnestly, "I want you to be like other girls and have a good time! Go to parties and have a couple of beaux and a good time like other girls," he repeated, as if he thought that perhaps she might not have un-

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Vernon swung around, and when he saw Sybil he walked toward her.

"What's the trouble, Syb?" he asked, and when Sybil had told him what awful thieves taxi men were and how she had expected Uncle Albert to send for her—didn't a host always meet his guests?—and a lot more which Kitty did not hear, he paid the chauffeur and went with Sybil into the house.

Kitty's nose tilted. "What a grafter Syb is!" she thought with disgust. "She's the type of girl I detest, using her sex to get taxis and meals for nothing. I should think Vern would see through her, even if he does play the 'cello. That was pretty raw. She has spent every penny she could put her fingers on for clothes. Oh, there are Bert and the twins! He must be perfectly furious to find himself here. But his paper was as selfish as my league. What loves the twins are! Poor little mites! Will you see their clothes! They need the helping hand of our sweet, refined gentlewoman, Mrs. Susan Ellsworth. Oh, dear, I wish it were over! I wish Mrs. Bagehot was shut up in this house. I don't care if there is a bath attached to my room instead of across the hall. I hate it! I hate it! I hate it!"

She spent so much time hating Uncle Albert's experiment and watching the sunset, which really was wonderful, that she never would have thought of

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"Good for you, old dear!" Arthur evidently thought that she should be quite decent to her old Uncle Albert. "Of course he means well! I'm glad you see it that way. I hope his experiment is a big success!"

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"Of course it is the mirror," she decided, and she smiled at it. But it was not the mirror. It had absolutely nothing to do with Kitty's more finished appearance.

If she had been the first member of Uncle Albert's family to come home she was the last to join the group in the living room. Even tardy Sybil was down in a smart gown of green satin. Vernon wore a dinner coat, but Bert, the socialist, had refused to don garments which might emphasize class consciousness, and he had not changed his every-day blue serge, although with it he wore a very puzzled frown. George, the schoolboy, neatly scrubbed and brushed and with a clean collar around his rebellious neck, was walking around fingering the most precious articles, until Uncle Albert could bear it no longer and told him for heaven's sake to sit down and be still until they could

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have their dinner. Uncle Albert looked smaller than ever in a dinner coat, and he stood on the rug before the fire as if he did not know what to do with a family now that he had one. Uncle Albert had never been at a loss to know what to do with a Ming vase or a Boule cabinet, but he certainly was puzzled as to what to do with a family.

Kitty watched them from the doorway for a moment, and she laughed softly at Uncle Albert's family and Uncle Albert's home and even at Uncle Albert himself. How ridiculous it all was! And how ghastly that money could give a man the power to uproot half a dozen people and transplant them to soil they hated and in which they knew they could never grow. Bert was right. The plutocrats did abuse their power. It would be odd if this experiment of old Uncle Albert's would make an anarchist of her.

Uncle Albert's roaming, restless eye saw her, and he called fretfully for her to come in.

"We are waiting for Mrs. Ellsworth," he said, pulling out his watch again, an operation the watch must have been used to, for Uncle Albert had pulled it out a hundred times that day. "I can't for the life of me see why women can't be as punctual as men! I told Sue we would have dinner at half-past seven and here it is a quarter of eight. Oh, there she is!"

Kitty swung around quickly. And she almost laughed again when she saw her chaperon. Nothing less formidable than Mrs. Susan Ellsworth of Manitou had ever been made. She was pleasantly plump and short and she had piled her gray hair on the top of her head and wore ridiculous high-heeled shoes to make you think she was as tall as you were. Her round face was almost as smooth as Sybil's, and her brown eyes

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were apologetic as she glanced around the room. Uncle Albert was perfectly right. She was sweet and refined, but still Kitty laughed, for she had an odd feeling that it was she who would chaperon Mrs. Ellsworth. Mrs. Ellsworth would never be able to chaperon her or Sybil. Why! the little creature couldn't say boo to a goose.

"Well!" grunted Uncle Albert with a sad lack of the courtesy which he demanded from his family. "You're down at last. I thought I told you seventy-three. Never mind excuses but just come in and meet the family. That is Kitty Forsythe beside you."

Mrs. Ellsworth peered up at Kitty Forsythe.

"My dear!" she held out both of her soft white hands, "I am so glad to know you. I never met your mother, but I loved your grandmother. How strange that Albert should have brought us together. I want you to like me." She spoke wistfully, which surely was no way for a chaperon to speak.

"I'm going to love you, Mrs. Ellsworth!" Kitty spoke with sweet impulsiveness, for she was touched by the wistfulness in the brown eyes and in the soft, gentle voice.

"If I am going to preside over this happy family I am not going to be called Mrs. Ellsworth. I should like you to call me"—she hesitated as she stood holding Kitty's hand, and she turned her back to Uncle Albert before she added shyly—"Aunt Susanne!"

Uncle Albert snorted. "Susanne! Your name is Susan. They can call you Aunt Sue!"

"Susanne!" insisted Mrs. Ellsworth, and her brown eyes snapped in a way which made Kitty change her opinion. Perhaps she could say boo to a goose if she could contradict Uncle Albert to his face.

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Kitty was usually rather careless with her toilet, doing her pretty hair any way and putting on her clothes with more haste than distinction, but now she lingered over each step. Every appointment was so luxurious, so dainty, that it was a pleasure to loiter. When at last she slipped into her frock of black satin she looked curiously in the many mirrors of her dressing room and was surprised to see how different they told her she looked than her shabby old looking-glass at the settlement had ever told her.

"Of course it is the mirror," she decided, and she smiled at it. But it was not the mirror. It had absolutely nothing to do with Kitty's more finished appearance.

If she had been the first member of Uncle Albert's family to come home she was the last to join the group in the living room. Even tardy Sybil was down in a smart gown of green satin. Vernon wore a dinner coat, but Bert, the socialist, had refused to don garments which might emphasize class consciousness, and he had not changed his every-day blue serge, although with it he wore a very puzzled frown. George, the schoolboy, neatly scrubbed and brushed and with a dean collar around his rebellious neck, was walking around fingering the most precious articles, until Uncle Albert could bear it no longer and told him for heaven's sake to sit down and be still until they could

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have their dinner. Uncle Albert looked smaller than ever in a dinner coat, and he stood on the rug before the fire as if he did not know what to do with a family now that he had one. Uncle Albert had never been at a loss to know what to do with a Ming vase or a Boule cabinet, but he certainly was puzzled as to what to do with a family.

Kitty watched them from the doorway for a moment, and she laughed softly at Uncle Albert's family and Uncle Albert's home and even at Uncle Albert himself. How ridiculous it all was! And how ghastly that money could give a man the power to uproot half a dozen people and transplant them to soil they hated and in which they knew they could never grow. Bert was right. The plutocrats did abuse their power. It would be odd if this experiment of old Uncle Albert's would make an anarchist of her.

Uncle Albert's roaming, restless eye saw her, and he called fretfully for her to come in.

"We are waiting for Mrs. Ellsworth," he said, pulling out his watch again, an operation the watch must have been used to, for Uncle Albert had pulled it out a hundred times that day. "I can't for the life of me see why women can't be as punctual as men! I told Sue we would have dinner at half-past seven and here it is a quarter of eight. Oh, there she is!"

Kitty swung around quickly. And she almost laughed again when she saw her chaperon. Nothing less formidable than Mrs. Susan Ellsworth of Manitou had ever been made. She was pleasantly plump and short and she had piled her gray hair on the top of her head and wore ridiculous high-heeled shoes to make you think she was as tall as you were. Her round face was almost as smooth as Sybil's, and her brown eyes

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were apologetic as she glanced around the room. Uncle Albert was perfectly right. She was sweet and refined, but still Kitty laughed, for she had an odd feeling that it was she who would chaperon Mrs. Ellsworth. Mrs. Ellsworth would never be able to chaperon her or Sybil. Why! the little creature couldn't say boo to a goose.

"Well!" grunted Uncle Albert with a sad lack of the courtesy which he demanded from his family. You're down at last. I thought I told you seventy. Never mind excuses but just come in and meet the family. That is Kitty Forsythe beside you."

Mrs. Ellsworth peered up at Kitty Forsythe.

"My dear!" she held out both of her soft white hands, "I am so glad to know you. I never met your mother, but I loved your grandmother. How strange that Albert should have brought us together. I want you to like me." She spoke wistfully, which surely was no way for a chaperon to speak.

"I'm going to love you, Mrs. Ellsworth!" Kitty poked with sweet impulsiveness, for she was touched by the wistfulness in the brown eyes and in the soft, gentle voice.

"If I am going to preside over this happy family I am not going to be called Mrs. Ellsworth. I should like you to call me"—she hesitated as she stood holding Kitty's hand, and she turned her back to Uncle Albert before she added shyly—"Aunt Susanne!"

Uncle Albert snorted. "Susanne! Your name is Susan. They can call you Aunt Sue!"

"Susanne!" insisted Mrs. Ellsworth, and her brown eyes snapped in a way which made Kitty change her opinion. Perhaps she could say boo to a goose if she could contradict Uncle Albert to his face.



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Kitty laughed softly. It was such fun to see Uncle Albert defied by the sweet, gentle, refined woman he had put at the head of his home.

"Susan is such a staid, sensible name," explained Mrs. Ellsworth. "I've been called Sue all my life. I should like a change. And Susanne—Susanne——"

Uncle Albert snorted again and would not let her tell them what Susanne meant to her because he interrupted her sharply. "I suppose your husband called you Susanne?" If her husband had, he supposed that he would have to let his young people, but he considered it a most unsuitable name for a woman as old as Sue Ellsworth.

A flush which was red enough to sting stained Aunt Susanne's cheeks, and she dropped her eyes, but she never told Uncle Albert whether the name held dear associations for her or not. Indeed, she could say nothing. Kitty flashed an indignant glance at her uncle and slipped an arm around Aunt Susanne's small waist.

"I shall love to call you Aunt Susanne. It is a dear name!" And she looked at Uncle Albert as if to tell him that she stood beside her chaperon, and he could make what he pleased of their defiance.

Uncle Albert snorted for the third time. "H-m!" was all he said. "If you have made up your mind to that you might come and meet the rest of these young people, Sue!" He brought the name out clear and loud. He would never call Sue Ellsworth Susanne. The idea! Her name was Susan. It always had been Susan. Susanne! H-m! "They all belong to our family."

## V

As he looked around his table and saw his family, Uncle Albert felt as if a cold wave were blowing against his spine. For the first time since he had conceived his plan for the regeneration of his young people he was afraid of it. But here was his family, and what on earth was he going to do with it? He turned to Aunt Susanne for help.

But Aunt Susanne was beaming at the young people who separated her from Uncle Albert. There was no cold wind blowing on her as she looked around the big, paneled room with its wonderful furnishings and at Hoskins, the butler, and the black and white maid, who was assisting him, and at the table with its handsome china and silver and crystal. She drew a deep breath.

"I feel like the old woman in the Mother Goose rhyme," she confided to Bert, who sat at her right. "I cannot believe that it is I sitting here with all of you dear young people. And with Albert, too," she added quickly so that Uncle Albert would not feel slighted. "It is too amazing to be true. I am almost sixty years old and nothing half as pleasant as this ever happened to me before!"

Uncle Albert looked at her quickly from under his shaggy white eyebrows. He was not exactly sure that he was satisfied with the chaperon he had chosen. Susanne! The very idea! Sue Ellsworth had surprised him, and it was barely possible that she might disappoint him also.

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"Don't you call your marriage half as pleasant as this?" he asked with more bluntness than tact. "I've never been married myself, but if I had been I hope I should have looked upon it as half as pleasant as this."

A painful flush stabbed Aunt Susanne's cheeks again and there was a strange expression, almost a frightened look in her face, and when she spoke her voice quivered as if inside she was a quaking jelly.

"Yes, yes, of course! A wedding is always a pleasant event," was all she could say.

Kitty felt sorry for her and flew to the rescue. Trouble always made Kitty as soft-hearted as success made her hard-hearted. "It isn't an event any more," she exclaimed. "It's only an incident."

"Humph!" snorted Uncle Albert in disgust. "If that's the case what do you young rebels regard as an event?" He really wanted to know, and he waited impatiently for one of them to tell him.

"I'd like some more soup," remarked young George, who had been attending strictly to the business which had brought him to the table and had only taken a recess because his plate was empty.

Uncle Albert shot a quick glance at the youthful appetite and waved his hand to Hoskins as he repeated his question. "What do you rebels regard as an event?" Rebels promised to be a word as popular in Uncle Albert's vocabulary as fools.

"Work!" exclaimed Bert, the socialist, who had been sitting as if he were on a silence strike. He shot the word out like a bomb and it made Uncle Albert, who thought he knew something of the way Bert's fellow socialists regarded work, snort derisively.

Aunt Susanne exclaimed "My dear!" and looked

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at him in mild astonishment. It was the young people, at least it was Kitty and Vernon, who exclaimed: "Hear! Hear!" If Sybil had been seventy years old and an autocrat like Uncle Albert she would have joined in his snort, for work was not an event to Sybil; but as she was only nineteen and spoiled and selfish she sniffed.

"That is very interesting!" Aunt Susanne looked at Bert over as well as through her gold-framed glasses. "You know I've lived in a small town all my life, and I don't feel that I know very much about the real world, the world where things are done. I am afraid I am very old-fashioned but I should like to learn to be new-fashioned!" She made the suggestion timidly, perhaps they might think she was too hopelessly old-fashioned ever to be new-fashioned. "I want to learn all about these great movements which are changing the world. Would you believe it, my dear," she turned to Kitty, "there was not a single suffragist in all Manitou. And the only socialist I ever met was a tramp who stopped to ask for a needle and thread and a bit of soap. He said he had as much right to be clean as I had. He told me a little about socialism, but I want to know more. It sounded wonderful as he explained it!" She drew a long breath. "I suppose there are thousands of socialists in Waloo, just thousands of them!"

Uncle Albert almost jumped from his chair. He glared at Aunt Susanne. There was no doubt but she would disappoint him if she talked of socialism. Where in all Manitou, a little town of two thousand men, women and children, had she heard of socialism? He had expected her to be as conservative as he was, but he had never thought of the influence of the

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printed word, and he had forgotten how monotonous life in a small town can be for a lonely woman who has more imagination than money. Bert was not stricken dumb. He laughed for the first time since he had entered Uncle Albert's home, and after a stunned second the others laughed with him. Even if they lost a hundred thousand dollars each by laughing they just had to laugh. The situation was too laughable.

"Yes," Bert joyfully answered Aunt Susanne's timid question as soon as he had finished his laugh, "I should say there were many thousand socialists in Waloo."

"May I have some more roast beef and potatoes?" asked the young appetite called George. "That is, if there are any more," he added politely.

Uncle Albert turned to him and spoke more fiercely than he would have spoken if his irritation had not been so great: "Didn't they give you anything to eat at that school of yours?"

George looked up from the replenished plate which Hoskins put before him. "Sure they did! We had fine chow!"

Aunt Susanne hastened with the oil to pour it on what she vaguely sensed were troubled waters. "George is at the age when he is always hungry," she said with a kindly smile for George. "I expect you have forgotten what it is to be a boy, Albert." And then she smiled at Bert and returned to the subject which interested her more than George's appetite or Uncle Albert's poor memory. "Perhaps you can tell me all about this socialism? I get so confused when I read the papers, although I have taken the *Beacon* for two years. And I want to attend some political meetings for women. Now that we have the vote it

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is so important that we should use it right. Don't you agree with me, Albert?" And her smile passed to Uncle Albert as if to include him in this delightful conversation. "I suppose the girls know all about it." She looked at Sybil and then at Kitty. "Perhaps you will go with me, Kitty?"

Uncle Albert gasped and gurgled before he could find his voice. "No, Kitty can't!" he said in something of a roar, so much of a roar that George crossed his knife and fork on his empty plate and stared at him. "And Bert can't talk to you about socialism. Those subjects are forbidden in my home!"

"Why, Albert!" Aunt Susanne was surprised. "I thought all progressive people were interested in progressive ideas. You surprise me!" She regarded him curiously, as if he disappointed as well as surprised her, before she shook her head as if it would be impossible to understand a man who was not interested in progressive ideas. "But you can have no objection if we talk about music," she went on with a little acid in her words. "We never heard any that was worth talking about in Manitou. I hope you won't mind taking your old aunt to a Symphony concert, Vernon?" She turned to the romantic 'cellist as quickly as a magnetic needle turns to the North Pole. "Or what is that other musical organization I read so much about in the *Gazette*,—yes, the Waloo String Quartet?"

Vernon choked before he could answer. "I should be glad to take you, Aunt Susanne," he said fervently, "but I can't go myself."

"I never said you couldn't go to a Symphony concert!" declared Uncle Albert, who was growing rather purple in the face and very fiery in the eyes.

"I don't like salad," remarked George as Hoskins

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would have placed a portion of mayonnaise crow aspic before him. "It's a waste of room," he explained so that they would know why he did not care salad.

"Don't you want these children even to hear music?" Aunt Susanne was astonished. "Why, Albert Galus! What nonsense! Music is one of the most softening and refining influences in the world. I don't understand?" It was plain to all of them that she did understand.

"I'll explain after dinner," mumbled Uncle Albert in a disgust too deep for words. "We need not discuss suffrage or socialism or music now!" If Sue had shown the sweet womanly tact he had credited her with, she could see that he never wished to discuss these subjects.

"What shall we talk about?" Aunt Susanne put the question rather hopelessly. She realized that she knew nothing of what interested the younger generation, but she wanted to show these young people that she was in sympathy with them and interested in their interests. Uncle Albert's stern voice robbed her of conversational topics and left her speechless.

Uncle Albert frowned impatiently. "You might say something about the advantage it would be if a girl knew something of housekeeping and home management," he growled.

She raised the eyebrows which Nature had penciled as finely as Art had brushed Sybil's. "Do you mean cooking and sewing and washing, Albert? I thought electric machines had done away with all that. And don't you have delicatessens and—what is it?—caterias in Waloo? Why, even in Manitou we have stopped baking our own bread. It is so much cheaper

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and surer to buy it at the bakery. Of course men in your position, Albert, can maintain an establishment like this, but for ordinary people—I am sure that I read that housework and homes would have to be re-organized now that so much household machinery has been invented, and that women would have to find their work outside of the home."

"Susan Ellsworth—" began Uncle Albert and stopped, choked by a rush of words to his tongue. But he could not utter one of them to save his soul. He could only stare at Susan Ellsworth and feel that he had never been so bitterly disappointed in a woman in his life.

"I'd like some more ice cream, please," remarked George pleasantly. "And cake, too. I think I'll take two pieces. They're so little," he said, when Hoskins offered him the cake.

Uncle Albert pushed back his chair. He could not sit there and listen to any more such confounded nonsense. He felt as if there was a conspiracy against him. But before he could do more than push back his chair and glare at his family in quite a head-of-a-family way there was a rush of small feet in the hall and two little nightgowned figure appeared on the threshold.

"Daddy," whimpered a feminine voice, "I was afraid! I was awful afraid!"

"It's such a nawful big house," explained a masculine voice with a brave attempt to explain the feminine fear. "Me an' Sister aren't used to so much room."

"Twins!" Bert pushed back his chair and rose.

"Oh, the pretty dears!" cried Aunt Susanne. Surely Uncle Albert would not growl or frown if she admired the tousle-headed, rosy-cheeked babies. "But they'll catch cold. Come here, sweetheart!" She held out



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her hand to Sister, but Sister ran to climb up her father. After one look at her round, smiling face Brother threw his arms around her.

"Careful, Bud," warned his father, for Aunt Susanne might not be used to the roughness of a small boy.

"Bud?" Uncle Albert repeated the name questioningly.

"I call them Brother and Sister so that they will always remember that they are the brother and sister of the world," Bert told him defiantly.

"H-m!" Uncle Albert did not say much but he looked volumes. He was just as defiant as Bert. "What are their other names? Albert!" He seemed pleased to hear that there was an Albert Galusha the Third. "And Mary? Good, sensible names. We'll call them Albert and Mary!" he said firmly.

Bud looked up. "I shan't come if you do!" he declared in his shrill little voice. "I shan't come 'less you call Bud!"

"An' I'm Sis!" Sis's round rosy face looked at Uncle Albert, and she all but stuck out her tongue at him. "My name's Sis!" she told Uncle Albert a second time, right to his face.

Kitty giggled. She could not help it, but she did not blame Uncle Albert when he glared at her.

"Of course, if you older people are going to support the children in their disobedience I can't expect to be obeyed," he said stiffly.

"I'm sorry," Kitty told him penitently. "I didn't mean to laugh."

"My name's Bud!" repeated Bud, and he made a chant of the phrase and gave it in a singsong voice: "My name is Bud—Bud—Bud. My name is Bud."

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"My name is Sis!" Sis took the chant and turned it into a duet. "My name is Sis—Sis—Sis!"

"That will do!" When Uncle Albert spoke like that men ran to do his bidding and now even Bud and Sis brought their duet to an abrupt close.

"My name is Bud!" insisted Bud, and his lips quivered.

"And my name is Sis!" whimpered the small woman insisting on the last word.

It was Aunt Susanne who extricated Uncle Albert from the pit he had dug for himself. "When I was a little girl," she began in the time-honored way, and Bud twisted around to see where this new voice came from. He reached up and patted her cheek.

"I like you," he interrupted. "You have such a nice soft face."

"And I like you." She kissed his cheek. "But you shouldn't run down here in your nightie. Where is your nurse?"

"We ran away from her," Bud confided in a loud whisper and with a glance out of the corner of his eye at Uncle Albert. "We'd rather not have a nurse. We like to do as we please."

Uncle Albert's stern face had softened as he watched Aunt Susanne with her arms about the little tousle-headed boy and as he looked at the little girl dinging to her father, her face scarlet, her eyes big with excitement, but as Bud told what he liked to do Uncle Albert grunted again.

"You can't do as you please," he said bluntly. "Nobody can!"

Bud looked at Uncle Albert and tossed his head. He was not a bit afraid of Uncle Albert even if Uncle Albert did frown and grunt. "I can!" he insisted

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sturdily. "I'm a man, and I can do as I please. Men are strong an' brave," he explained.

"So is ladies," insisted his sister. "Ladies is strong now, too, an' they can do as they please like mens. What's that?" Her small finger pointed to Sybil's plate.

"Guess!" Sybil took a spoon from the table and offered Sis a taste of the contents of her plate.

Sister's tongue just touched the dainty. "Ice cream!" she cried in a joyous whoop. "Please, I'd like some right away?" And she looked, as she should have looked, at the head of the table, at Aunt Susanne.

"I'll take some more, too, if there isn't anything else to do," offered George, who had finished his second portion and was almost bored to death.

"Do you think they should eat ice cream now?" But Aunt Susanne nodded to Hoskins, whose eyes were popping from his head. Never so long as Hoskins had served Uncle Albert had dinner been interrupted by twins in blue flannelette nightgowns.

"It is always time for ice cream, isn't it, twinnies?" asked Kitty.

"Whose birthday is it?" demanded Bud. "Or is it Christmas again? We never have ice cream only on birthdays and Christmas and Sundays." His eyes roamed from one face to another as if in search of the owner of the birthday. "And we have it in cones. It saves dishes. Haven't you any ice-cream cones?" he asked Hoskins as the butler placed a plate before him. "Some day I expect everybody'll have ice-cream cones," he said in a very grown-up manner as he seized his spoon.

"When do you suppose that day will be?" asked Vernon idly.

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Bud knew, small as he was. He cocked his head on one side and looked at Vernon seriously.

"When there isn't any rich men nor any poor men but everybody will have enough," he said in his sweet, clear voice. "My daddy told me when it would be."

That was too much, far too much, for Uncle Albert, and he rose to his feet. "My Godfrey!" he exclaimed as he glared at Bert.

"Is he swearing?" asked Sis, pausing in the pleasant task of putting ice cream into her red mouth.

But Uncle Albert had recovered the voice which he feared he had lost forever. "So you even teach your babies anarchy!" he shouted.

"You don't need to teach people," Kitty told him quickly. "These things are in the air. I was never taught the things I believe in. I just felt them. You can't fight against the age, Uncle Albert. You can go with it and be a part of it, or you can go against it and be beaten to pieces, but you can't fight against it and do anything."

Uncle Albert never heard her. He was looking at Bert with a curious expression on his face, as if he were stunned and startled, not frightened perhaps, but very much startled.

"Corrupt your own children!" he mumbled, and he tramped out of the room, his disgust too great for words.

"C'rrupt!" Bud was fascinated by the new word. "C'rrupt—c'rrupt," he made a song out of it. "That's a funny word, daddy: C'rrupt—c'rrupt——"

"Hush, Bud!" Evidently Bert was heard when he spoke, for Bud dropped his chant to a whisper. "Come. You've had enough ice cream."

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"Indeed they have!" cried Aunt Susanne, feeling rather bewildered. What on earth did Albert Galusha mean with his strange actions and his stranger speech? She could not imagine what he meant, but she hoped that he would tell her soon. "I'm afraid they have had too much. They say they're not used to it. They must go back to bed."

The twins finished their ice cream with a scramble, and when she had licked the spoon for the last time Sis turned to her father and put her arms around his neck.

"I'm afraid," she faltered, and her little face quivered, "I'm awfully afraid in this big house and its big fings."

"I'd be afraid, too," Bud's face twitched, "I'd be afraid, too, if I wasn't a man, a big strong man."

"You're not afraid with me?" Aunt Susanne bent over him, and he snuggled closer.

"You're like the mother in the story, an old mother, not a young one," he said. "Course I'm not afraid with you."

Kitty had pushed back her chair, and now she stood beside him.

"And you're not afraid with Kitty, either," she told him laughingly. "Come, Buddie, and I'll take you up while dad carries Sis." And she held out her arms.

Bud hesitated. He liked the soft warmth of Aunt Susanne's cradling arms, but there was a charm in Kitty's coaxing face.

"I'm pretty big," he objected. "I don't suppose you could carry such a big boy."

"You're not as heavy as a bag of flour. No, Vern, I want to take him. Let me see!" She lifted him as

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if to test his weight before she carried him from the room.

Uncle Albert was pacing up and down the hall, his head bent, his hands clasped behind him. How was he going to live through the year? And what was he going to do with this family? He stopped asking himself conundrums and looked at Kitty.

"That's the way I like to see a woman, Kitty, with a child in her arms," he smiled. Perhaps things would turn out all right. He had never seen Kitty with a child in her arms before. A child was bound to waken the sleeping dog of womanliness in any girl. He was glad that Bert had twins. "You look very sweet and womanly, my dear."

"It isn't womanly to take care of children, Uncle Albert," Kitty stopped to answer him. "It's patriotic. Children are the most precious possession the state has. The war taught us that if it didn't teach us much else. And a woman's arms are large enough to hold more than children," she told him before she went up the stairs, panting a bit, for if Bud was not as heavy as a bag of flour neither was he as light as a feather.

## VI

BUD must have been almost asleep when Kitty put him down on his bed, for he voiced no objection when she tucked the cover around his soft, warm, little body. He did throw his arm about Kitty's neck, and she bent to lay her cheek against his flushed face before she kissed him. He snuggled down in his bed like a contented puppy. Bert had tucked Sis into her bed and told her to be a good girl and to go to sleep at once. When he turned around he faced Kitty.

"Bert!" she exclaimed, and there was any amount of dismay and despair in her voice, low as it was. "What are we going to do? There are three hundred and sixty-four more days in this year!"

"I'll have plenty to do!" Bert was not at all dismayed or despairing at the number of days left in the year. "I'll be at the factory all day, making a study of Uncle Albert as an employer, you know, and in the evening I'm going to study Uncle Albert as a capitalist."

"You are!" In a flash Kitty ceased to be despairing and became envious.

"I'm going to turn him inside out," explained Bert with a nod of his rough, thatched head.

"Bert!" But Kitty could not see Uncle Albert as a pocket being turned inside out by Bert, and she said so. "Will he let you?"

"He can't help himself. That's one reason I'm here, Kitty. The old *Beacon* never would have ac-

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cepted his check if I hadn't told Swanson what a corking chance it was to get inside facts."

"But is that quite honest, Bert? It sounds like spying to me. Uncle Albert said we were to forget all about socialism and politics, you know."

"We'll ask him." Bert refused to argue the ethics of the question. "But I bet he'll be flattered to think I find him worth studying."

"H-m!" Kitty borrowed Uncle Albert's favorite exclamation. "But what am I going to do, Bert?" she whimpered. "I can't work in any factory and the league wouldn't give a penny for a study of Uncle Albert. Uncle Albert said Aunt Susanne was to teach Syb and me to cook!" The very thought was horrifying until she stopped being horrified to giggle. "Bert, did you see Uncle Albert's face when Aunt Susanne said she wanted to know all about socialism and suffrage? I nearly died! Uncle Albert was so sure she shared all of his quaint ideas. Do you suppose she will give in to him or will she insist on staying human?"

"I wonder?" questioned Bert.

At that very moment Aunt Susanne was listening to Uncle Albert, who had taken her into the library while he told her that he had bought Kitty Forsythe from the League of Women Voters and Bert from his red socialist rag and Vernon from a fool musician organization and Sybil from her crazy Bohemian life. He seemed quite pleased with his purchases, but Aunt Susanne looked stunned.

"Why, Albert Galusha!" she exclaimed. "Why, Albert Galusha!"

"There wasn't any other way, Sue," he explained. "They would never listen to me. I talked to them,



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and I begged them, and then I bought them. I couldn't let them go on in their fool ideas without making a last effort to save them."

"How do you know their ideas are foolish?" Aunt Susanne had raised her soft white hand and slapped him across the mouth. Uncle Albert would not have been more astonished than he was by her question. "You know, Albert," she went on in a soft voice, "you belong to the horse age and these young people are the product of the automobile period. I wonder they want to move faster than you do. I wonder what kind of theories a general use of aeroplanes will produce? It doesn't seem as if the next generation could be any more independent and revolutionary, does it?"

"I don't care about the next generation!" Uncle Albert spoke testily because Aunt Susanne would not understand and sympathize with him. That was what he had brought her from Manitou to do. He wondered if the heads of all the present-day families had as much trouble to explain to their partners as he was having. "I'm only interested in now. And I'm not going to have Bert and Kitty going around preaching bombs and revolutions! And I don't consider playing a fiddle, even a big fiddle, manly work. And Sybil has got to learn to behave like a gentlewoman instead of a chorus girl. I shan't tolerate any nonsense from any of them! If I can't teach them some sense in a year——" He stopped and looked at Aunt Susanne and waited for her to say of course he could teach his young people a lot of sense, that in a year they would be as conventional as he was.

But Aunt Susanne only shook her gray head. "I doubt if you are taking the right way, Albert. You

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can't put young people into a house and call it a home and expect them to do this and not to do that just because you say so. Not in these days! I've read, and I've watched, and even in Manitou that doesn't do. Nobody ever made a home out of four walls and a lot of rules. Jails are made that way. If you take my advice you'll show some interest in these fads of the children and let them see you want to learn the truth about them and——"

"I know the truth!" roared Uncle Albert. "Rotten red nonsense!"

"That may be. I don't know enough to agree with you or to contradict you, but it seems to me that if you would talk to Kitty and to Bert like a sane, open-minded man you might convince them that there was something on your side of the fence, enough any way for them to come and look at it."

But that was not Uncle Albert's plan. Perhaps he did not dare to talk to Kitty and to Bert. He glared at Aunt Susanne as she watched him with a look of real anxiety on her face.

"I thought when I asked you to come here and help me, Sue Ellsworth, that you had a little sense," he stammered. "I'm disappointed in you!"

"Do you want me to go back to Manitou?" Aunt Susanne asked with disconcerting quickness.

"No, I don't!" stuttered Uncle Albert, who did not know where to look for another sweet, refined gentlewoman to preside over his home and family. All the women he knew were actively aggressive or just fools. And he did not want either in his home. "No. But I do think, Sue, you might try to see my point of view!" That seemed only fair.

"I'll try, Albert, but you've got to take the world

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as it is, because you won't find it what you think it should be. Dear me, I can remember my grandmother saying the same thing to my mother when I was a girl. Mother didn't see what the world was coming to with such wild young folks trying to run it. I expect I'm an old woman, Albert Galusha, but I've tried to keep a young mind. I'm not going to let my brain get old and wrinkled if my face does. I think you are making a mistake. You don't agree with me. Very well. So long as I stay here I shall consider your wishes, but I tell you frankly that I'm going to investigate these questions for myself. I'll tell you what I learn," she was kind enough to promise. "I shan't talk to the children. I shall talk to you."

"I shan't listen," declared Uncle Albert. "I get enough of that sort of thing down town. I shan't have it at home."

"We needn't decide that now. But in these days, Albert Galusha, the wise man, or woman either, doesn't say what he will or will not do. Words aren't pleasant eating for any one." She looked at his frowning face and patted his arm in a friendly fashion. "This is a beautiful home you have, Albert, and I can understand why you didn't want to live in it alone. It was a splendid idea to invite us all to spend the year with you. We shall have a fine time."

Uncle Albert was not to be smoothed down at once, his feathers had been too ruffled. "We won't have a fine time if you side with those wild young rebels," he grunted.

"It's wonderful what money can do," went on Aunt Susanne, gazing at the painted pioneers hanging on the wall. "That's a good picture of you, Albert. The

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artist has caught your best expression." That sounded as if Uncle Albert had a drawerful of expressions up in his room and only wore his best on Sundays and holidays. "You must have seen a lot of changes since you came to this state as a boy."

"I have," acknowledged Uncle Albert, and he smiled grimly, but still he did smile.

"Of course you have. A man couldn't live to be seventy years old without seeing changes."

If he caught the suggestion which was in her words he did not say so, but he looked at her from under his shaggy white brows and said sharply: "I must say marriage hasn't improved you, Sue. You didn't talk like this in the old days. What kind of a man was your husband?"

Aunt Susanne caught her breath and again that startled look flashed in her face. "I don't care to talk about him, Albert," she said with a certain dignity. "The less you say about my—" she gulped—"my marriage, the better you will please me."

"H-m!" There was something queer about this marriage if Sue didn't want to talk about it. So poor old Sue had picked up a crooked stick after going almost through the wood. Uncle Albert was glad that he had made no matrimonial mistake, that he had known when he was well off and remained a bachelor. Some day Sue would have to tell him her story, she owed it to him. Why, he had placed her at the head of his own family!

Aunt Susanne had risen and fluttered toward the door. "I am sure we understand each other, Albert," she said, but her voice trembled. "I am going back to the young people. They will think we are talking about them if we stay away any longer."

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When Kitty and Bert came down Kitty stopped in the hall and looked into the living room at the family circle. Uncle Albert was pacing up and down with his head dropped and his hands behind his back as he had paced the hall. Vernon was half asleep in a big chair by the fireplace where the birch logs smoldered. Sybil was yawning behind her fingers as she gave half an ear to Aunt Susanne's story of Manitou young people, and George had pulled a string from his pocket and was surreptitiously spinning a top on Uncle Albert's handsomest sofa. Kitty laughed.

"What a homelike picture!" she cried gayly. "Are we going to yawn at each other every night for a year? Uncle Albert, haven't you cards or checkers or dominoes?" She felt sorry for Uncle Albert. It was so very plain that he did not know what to do with his family now that he had bought it. "Or better still, come into the gallery, Uncle Albert, and tell us about your pictures."

Uncle Albert stopped pacing and frowning. "That's a very good idea, Kitty," he said approvingly. "I believe you will learn to be a gracious hostess." And he smiled at her. "Come, Sue, Sybil, Vern, George!" He called them to attention as he turned to Kitty.

Sybil made a face as they fell into line.

"I'll die if I have to spend another evening like this," she whispered to Vernon as they crossed the hall.

"You won't die alone," he prophesied gloomily. "What say, shall we cut the art lecture and run away? I dare you to go to the corner and slide down hill with the kids!"

"Oh!" Sybil gave a little squeal of delight. "But what will Uncle Albert say? I don't care! He might

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as well learn to-night as to-morrow that we have to have some fun. Come on!"

Uncle Albert never missed them as he went from one picture to another telling each story in a fashion which interested Aunt Susanne, amused Kitty and disgusted Bert. Bert never saw pictures hanging on the wall of Uncle Albert's gallery. He saw checks of fifty thousand and a hundred thousand and even of two hundred thousand dollars, and he had nothing but disgust for a man who would spend his money on painted canvases when he could share it with human beings. George pattered aimlessly about and wondered if he should ask Uncle Albert for an apple or an orange or a cooky. He thought he could eat half a dozen cookies if they were good. Perhaps the butler was the one to ask. He wondered.

"What is this, Uncle Albert?" Kitty had her nose to a canvas which was so black that it looked as if the wall of Uncle Albert's gallery had a hole in it and the tarnished gold framed a piece of inky black night instead of a painted picture. There was no composition, no color on the canvas so far as Kitty could see. "What is this, Uncle Albert?" she asked when he did not answer the first time.

Uncle Albert jumped and sent a quick glance from her to the black canvas before he said quickly and peremptorily: "Never mind that! It isn't worth looking at. Come and see this Botticelli!"

Bert strolled over to see the picture which was not worth looking at. "It isn't like you to have a worthless picture in your gallery, Uncle Albert," he said carelessly. "I suppose you picked it up from some poor soul for a penny and will have it cleaned and find

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a Murillo or a Rembrandt worth a fortune. That's what you collectors are always doing, isn't it?"

"It isn't what I'm doing," snapped Uncle Albert. "I have never taken advantage of any one in my life. I paid all that these pictures were worth. Every cent, Kitty, come here and let me tell you about this Botticelli!"

"Did you see that story in the *Gazette*?" asked Bert as Kitty with a last glance at the blackened canvas which had made her Uncle Albert turn purple obediently went to look at the Botticelli. "The Italian government is tired of being robbed of Italian art treasures, and it has sent agents to locate some of them and try to get them back. You know they were smuggled out of the country in all sorts of ways. Some of the pictures were painted over——"

"Bert!" interrupted Uncle Albert indignantly.

"Why, Bert!" murmured Aunt Susanne, who never would have suspected any one of such duplicity.

"I just wondered if you had seen the story," Bert said carelessly as he strolled over to one of Sir Joshua Reynolds's beautiful ladies. "If it's true many a collector will shake in his shoes."

"Maybe the Italian agent will steal your pictures, Uncle Albert," suggested George eagerly. Perhaps there might be something in an art gallery after all. George's face grew bright and hopeful.

"He can't steal them," Uncle Albert told him curtly. "This gallery is well provided with burglar alarms. It is entirely surrounded by burglar alarms."

"Show me where they are?" begged George. "I'd like to see how they work."

"Never mind how they work!" Uncle Albert spoke impatiently.

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And after waiting a moment for him to change his mind George slipped away. Perhaps that butler would tell him how the burglar alarm worked and, any way, he could give him an apple or an orange, if he would. Uncle Albert turned to Aunt Susanne and said rather contemptuously: "Bert doesn't believe in private collections. He thinks everything should belong to the state."

"I do!" Bert firmly indorsed Uncle Albert's statement. "All creative work——"

"Well, this collection will belong to the state some day," interrupted Uncle Albert in a loud voice. "I shall leave it to Waloo and until I die I shall work to make it as good a collection as possible." He stared at Bert. Really, Bert did get on his nerves with his insinuations and his beliefs. "Well, Sybil," he was glad when Sybil and Vernon came in pink-faced and laughing from their slide down the big hill with the children. "Where have you and Vernon been? I declare, is that eleven o'clock? Quite time for bed," he remarked genially again.

"I never go to bed until after midnight," Kitty said as she looked at Sybil and Vernon and wondered where they had been. They had plainly been somewhere while she had had to listen to Uncle Albert's rosy talk about his old pictures.

"You don't?" Uncle Albert shook his head. "That's nonsense, Kitty. The night was given you for sleep. What do you do until after midnight?"

"I usually have a class of foreign-born women or girls at the settlement and reports to get out or letters to write, or I read or do all sorts of things."

"I dance!" Sybil cried eagerly. "I dance until it is time for breakfast. Uncle Albert, this would be



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a gorgeous place for a party!" For the first time she regarded the gallery with approving eyes. "I hope you plan to entertain a lot while we are with you. I love to dance and dance and dance!"

"You do?" He smiled indulgently. "Well, we'll see about the parties. But now you'll go to bed. Kitty, too. Yes, my dear, you have no reports to make out or work to plan. I don't want these roses to turn to lilies." He touched her cheek. "Say good-night to your Aunt Sue and run along."

Kitty was all ready to tell him that she was twenty-two years old and she would go to bed when she pleased, when she saw the smile on Aunt Susanne's lips and unconsciously she smiled, too. Aunt Susanne held out her hand, and Kitty bent to kiss her cheek. It was a long, long time since Kitty Forsythe had kissed any one good-night, but as it was evidently expected of a member of a family she bent her head awkwardly. Aunt Susanne's arm held her for a moment while Uncle Albert beamed approval and encouragement.

Sybil followed Kitty into her room. "May I come in a moment?" she asked unnecessarily, for she was already in. "Isn't Uncle Albert an old bore? And what do you think of our Aunt Susanne?"

Kitty shrugged her shoulders, but she did not tell Sybil what she thought of Uncle Albert or of Aunt Susanne. She had never quite trusted Sybil's pink tongue which was hung in the middle and wagged at both ends.

"I hope Uncle Albert will give a lot of dances," went on Sybil fluffing her hair in front of Kitty's mirror. "I'll be glad to return some of my debts. My dear, I've been a perfect sponge. Had to be. You

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know I've been too poor to offer any one more than a cup of weak tea and a sandwich. But now we can give any kind of a party. Don't you think so? You know I'd rather give dances and be popular than vote. Of course I appreciate the splendid work you league women have done and are doing, and of course I did vote for Harding. We made up an election party and went just before the polls closed. It was fun! But you know there are so many things a girl just has to do that perhaps I shan't always have time to do much in politics. I suppose you think I am a perfect fool to care more to have people like me and give me a good time than I do for votes, but that is the way I am made. Just that way, silly and crazy to have a good time. And really all I can think of now is what a gorgeous time we can have with two young men in the house besides our outside friends to trot us around. Bert is just the same as a young man, although I think he is heavy, don't you? Aren't the kiddies dear? I really love children when they aren't dirty and cross and in the way. We should be able to go everywhere this winter, just everywhere!"

Kitty looked at her curiously. She was a type which Kitty considered as absolutely useless to the world, but perhaps it might be interesting to study a useless type. Kitty would have to do something. "You didn't mind coming to Uncle Albert for a year, did you?" she asked.

"Mind!" shrieked Sybil. "I was glad, my dear, glad! A year is a long time, I know, but how could a girl like me,—how could any girl, even one as clever as you are—earn a hundred thousand dollars in twelve months? That's what mother said. 'It seems to me,' she said, 'that Uncle Albert is paying you very well

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to live in his beautiful house and do nothing.' And he is! And I am grateful! And I'm going to show him that I'm grateful by being a decent member of the family. Perhaps then he'll change his mind and leave me a big legacy. Well," she yawned daintily, "if I don't go to bed I shan't please him. Nighty night, dear. Do try and like your silly little new sister! Every family should have a butterfly as well as an owl, and I'd far rather be the butterfly." She dropped a butterfly kiss on Kitty's cheek and fluttered away.

When the door closed behind her Kitty walked to the window and raised the shade. The moon had risen and flooded the river with a soft, silvery radiance which was enchanting. It made the world a fairyland. It was so beautiful that it made Kitty's heart ache and stabbed her with a feeling of loneliness. The loss of the work which had crowded her days made her painfully forlorn. What was she to do with this year which stretched before her like a flight of long stairs, three hundred and sixty-four long, long empty steps?

She turned her back to the fairy world and pulled down the shade with a snap and went to stand at the dressing table and frown at the girl she saw in its mirror.

"You aren't a very good sport, are you?" she asked impatiently. "You play the game in a perfectly rotten fashion!"

She nodded her head challengingly and said that perhaps there might be a grain of sense in the bushel of nonsense Sybil had uttered. Perhaps it would only be honest to give Uncle Albert something for his money. She didn't want his money, not a penny of it. There had been times when she had dreamed of a fortune so that she could give it to the league, but that

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time was past. The league had been horrid to her, and she did not care if it never had a penny. But she would have to find something to do. She wondered if Uncle Albert would let her work for child labor, or perhaps the Big Sister movement would impress him as quite womanly. She giggled at Uncle Albert's ideal of womanliness. "Uncle Albert should have lived in the Elizabethan period," she decided as she switched off the light.

## VII

UNCLE ALBERT moved restlessly in the old carved mahogany bed in which he had slept so peacefully for a baker's dozen of years. The air seemed to be rent and torn by shrieks and wails. Uncle Albert opened his eyes and quickly closed them again. He must be dreaming, for never before under his own roof had he been awakened by childish wails and shrieks. He pulled the eiderdown up about his neck, and then he pushed it away and sat bolt upright, for all the bells in Waloo began to ring in his house at once. It sounded like armistice day. Uncle Albert jumped stiffly from his bed and catching up his dressing gown stumbled out of his room.

In the dimly lighted hall he ran against Kitty Forsythe, who drew her kimono of rose crêpe de Chine more closely about her as she caught the sleeve of his dressing gown and clung to it as if the hall were the Mississippi river and Uncle Albert's dressing gown was the straw to which drowning men cling.

"What on earth is the matter, Uncle Albert?" she demanded tensely. "It sounds as if some one were being murdered!"

Uncle Albert did not stop to tell her indignantly that that was nonsense, no one would be murdered in his home, but went on down the hall and she had to run along by his side or release his sleeve. The heels of her rose mules clattered as she ran.

Sybil's door opened, and Sybil, distractingly pretty in her lavender negligee and lace cap, came whimpering out to catch Uncle Albert's other sleeve.

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"What is that awful noise, Uncle Albert?" she cried. "I'm scared to death!"

Uncle Albert had to stop at the head of the stairs because he was physically incapable of dragging their combined weight any farther and they would not let him go, although he shook himself impatiently.

"It's the burglar alarm!" he gasped as Bert and Vernon hurried from the other wing and joined them. "In the art gallery!"

The bells stopped ringing as suddenly as they had started. Kitty's voice sounded loud and shrill in the silence.

"The art gallery!" She repeated Uncle Albert's words like a well-trained parrot. "The Italian government!" she gasped, and she grasped Uncle Albert's arm so tightly that he winced. "You remember what Bert said about the agent?"

"Nonsense," began Uncle Albert, but there was something in his impatient exclamation which made the little group think that he did not believe that Bert's story was all nonsense. "The Italian government has something to do besides break into my gallery. Hello! There is some one down there!" For they could hear stealthy footsteps in the lower hall. "Turn on the lights, Vernon!" he ordered sharply.

"And be shot by a burglar in the dark? Not on your life!" objected Vernon.

"The light downstairs," explained Uncle Albert even more sharply. "The button is there to the right."

But before Vernon could find the button the lights flashed in the lower hall, and there was Hoskins, an overcoat pulled on over his gray pajamas. And facing Hoskins, frozen motionless with surprise, was George, the appetite.

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Uncle Albert was the first to speak, and his voice rang out like the voice of doom.

"George! George Sinclair! What are you doing down there at this time of night?"

As if he were a scrap of iron filings and Uncle Albert was a magnet George removed his eyes from Hoskins and moved slowly up the stairs.

"I wasn't doing anything," he muttered. "I was just seeing if your old burglar alarm really worked. Bert said some dago was going to rob you, and I thought somebody ought to try your old burglar alarm!" He was face to face with Uncle Albert, and he looked at him with an odd mixture of defiance and apology. "I didn't know it would make so much noise," he mumbled.

Uncle Albert stared at him. "You—you——" he began in a strangled voice, but Aunt Susanne put her hand on his arm.

"There, there, Albert! Don't get excited. There wasn't any burglar." As if it were the lack of a burglar which had stunned Uncle Albert and stolen his voice! "How could you disturb us this way, George?" she asked George reprovingly.

George caught his breath and looked at them before he dropped his eyes and began to paw the rug with his bare foot.

"It was all Uncle Albert's fault," he began, and Uncle Albert almost had apoplexy.

"My—my——" he began, but he could not do any better with that pronoun than he had with the other one he had tried.

"Let George tell his story, Albert," advised Aunt Susanne with a stern look at George.

"Well, if he'd showed me about the burglar alarm

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when I asked him I wouldn't have had to go down to try it. I didn't have any trouble finding it at all. It's under the rug at the door," he told them proudly. "And it went off fine. Gee whiz, it made a dandy noise!"

"George!" Uncle Albert made a third attempt to tell George what he thought and again his vocal cords failed him, and he had to stop. But he could glare at George, and he glared.

Involuntarily George moved closer to Aunt Susanne. Instinct told him that she was his best friend. "I didn't mean anything," he insisted with a whimper. His left hand fumbled with the pocket of his pajamas, and his face brightened when he found a forgotten cooky. Here was help.

Aunt Susanne put her arm around him, almost knocking the cooky from his fingers. "No, of course, you didn't," she said. "But it was very wrong of you to ring the alarm and waken everybody. You frightened us almost to death. I don't wonder your Uncle Albert is provoked with you."

Provoked was a mild word for the emotion which had gripped Uncle Albert. He cleared his throat loudly and managed to get control once more of the vocal cords which never before had betrayed him.

"Go to bed!" he told George sternly. "All of you go to bed!" His dictatorial eye swept them all. "This is outrageous! Go to bed, every one of you!"

They turned to obey him without a word, for words were unnecessary, but before they had taken more than a step they heard Aunt Susanne laugh.

"I can't help it, Albert," she said apologetically. "It makes me think of the time when you were Bert's age and rang the fire alarm in the Engine House in



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the middle of the night because Henry Clark dared you to do it."

Uncle Albert stared at her indignantly. Reminiscences were out of place at that moment, and Sue should have known it.

"That has nothing to do with this outrageous performance of George's," he said stiffly.

"No, of course it hasn't," she meekly agreed.

The heavy silence enveloped them again, but in a second it was broken by the shrieks and wails which had wakened Uncle Albert.

"What is that noise?" he demanded testily, while George slipped away munching his cooky. "What is the matter with those children?"

"It is the usual effect of capital on the proletariat," Bert explained with a sarcastic grin.

This was not the time for socialist discussion any more than it was a time for reminiscence, and Uncle Albert very properly turned his back to Bert.

"What is the matter with those children?" he asked Aunt Susanne in a manner which demanded a prompt and intelligent reply.

"They have a stomach ache." Aunt Susanne put Bert's explanation into words which Uncle Albert could understand at that hour of the morning.

"Stomach ache," he repeated feebly.

"Too much ice cream and cake. Children often have stomach ache," Aunt Susanne said reassuringly.

"Yes," chuckled Kitty. "It's a feature of every home!"

"Go to bed!" thundered Uncle Albert, and he turned away and crept into his old, carved mahogany bed and pulled the eiderdown over his head. He was almost sorry that he had ever decided to make one

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last effort to waken the sleeping dogs in his young people. They showed such a sad lack of appreciation of his efforts. Stomach ache, indeed! And that limb—young George! He would see him in the—Uncle Albert's breath caught snoringly in his nose, and he forgot all about young George.

Uncle Albert had quite looked forward to meeting his family around the breakfast table when they would discuss in a pleasant, happy fashion their plans for the day. But when he came into the sunny breakfast room there was no one there but a trim maid. Uncle Albert was already five minutes late, and he would not have waited another second for the King of England. He sat down to the table and picked up the morning paper, but he had to rise stiffly to say good-morning to Aunt Susanne. Behind Aunt Susanne was young George, who looked at Uncle Albert suspiciously. Uncle Albert looked at him with more than suspicion, but he only grunted and muttered that he was glad that some one thought that he should not breakfast alone.

"Where are the others?" he demanded as if Aunt Susanne had personal charge of them. "Vernon will be late at the office. And Bert! Just like a socialist to loaf in bed all day. Where are Kitty and Sybil? No sense in beginning the day wrong!"

"Sybil wants a tray in her room, but Kitty will be down presently," Aunt Susanne explained. "Bert had breakfast with the twins. He said if he didn't have breakfast with them he would never see them except on Sundays and holidays, and he doesn't want them to forget they have a father."

"Humph! If he plans to do a decent day's work he'd better get down at once."

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"He's gone. He wouldn't wait for you. He said it would look better for a factory hand to go to work in the police patrol car than in a limousine. He went out as I came down."

"He did?" Uncle Albert was nonplused. "I don't know but he is right. There are too many cars parked around the factories. You can let Sybil sleep this morning, but to-morrow I want her to eat breakfast with me. I'm not going to have her up all night to sleep all day. It's not a normal way to do. And you, young man," he looked at George, who had been working his way steadily through fruit, two dishes of cereal with cream and a generous portion of bacon and eggs and was happily engaged with hot cakes and maple syrup. "You get your cap. I'll leave you at school myself."

"You might let me have something to eat," grumbled George, who felt resentful at Uncle Albert, who had taken him from a school where he knew that the Latin master never looked at the written translations he demanded, but swept them into the waste-paper basket as soon as the class was dismissed, and that his English master invariably assigned the special topics to every fourth boy. Such knowledge was priceless to a student, and George deeply resented the fact that he would have to begin again in a school where the habits and idiosyncrasies of the masters were unknown to him. "I don't want to go to school on an empty stomach," he muttered.

"Empty stomach!" Uncle Albert had played with his grapefruit, pushed his cereal aside and nibbled at a piece of bacon and a bit of toast. Uncle Albert did not know what the word "breakfast" meant. "Your stomach can't be empty. Get your cap."

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"Let the poor child eat his breakfast, Albert," begged Aunt Susanne. "I don't want him to come home in the middle of the morning with a headache. What will you have, George?"

"I'd like some more cakes," answered George. "And another piece of bacon."

Uncle Albert pushed back his chair. "You don't need any more cakes nor any more bacon. You get your cap. Oh, eat them, if you must! But hurry. I've got to get down town before night!"

Aunt Susanne fluttered after him out to the hall where Hoskins stood with Uncle Albert's hat and coat.

"I hope you will have a happy day, Albert," Aunt Susanne said pleasantly. "It's a beautiful morning."

Uncle Albert glanced out of the window. The morning had not been beautiful to him, but it was quite according to his idea that the mistress of a home should speed her men to work with a smile and a pleasant word, and so he smiled grimly.

"Thank you, Sue!" Perhaps Sue would not prove as unsatisfactory as he had feared last night. "I hope you will have a pleasant day yourself. Is that you, Kitty?" As she came down the stairs. "You are late. I don't want it to happen again. I believe that a family should breakfast as a family. Any thing you want, Sue?" The question was an involuntary one and showed that Uncle Albert was indeed a proper family man. He was at the door before Aunt Susanne could answer him. "Send George out at once," he called back.

Aunt Susanne turned with an odd little smile to find Hoskins looking at her.

"This is quite a change for you, Hoskins," she said frankly. "To have a family to look after."

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"Yes, Mrs. Ellsworth, it is," he answered as frankly. "But it isn't the change for me that it is for Mr. Galusha. You see, I've lived in families before, and he never has."

Before Kitty had finished her grapefruit Vernon came in looking quite as romantic by broad sunlight as he had by the rose-shaded electric glow.

"Good-morning, relatives," he began cheerily, and then he caught a glimpse of the frost-powdered world outside of the casement windows. "My word!" he exclaimed, cutting his greeting short so that he could walk to the window and look across the lawn where every branch and sprig of the shrubbery had been transformed into fluffy white feathers and sprinkled with diamonds. Even the tall trees were powdered with jewels. "My word!" he exclaimed with a deep breath. "What a world!"

"It is beautiful," agreed Aunt Susanne. "But, Vernon, my dear, I thought you were going to work in your uncle's office to-day?"

"So I am," Vernon said absently, as he stood and looked at the beautiful world spread out before him. "But I didn't plan to begin before daylight. Get the play of the sun on that snowbank, Kit? Doesn't it sing to you?" And he began to hum the play the sunbeams sang to him. "Doesn't it go like that? I'll show you!" He glanced about as if he expected to find a piano in Uncle Albert's breakfast room, and he would have dashed to the music room if Aunt Susanne had not stopped him.

"Please eat your breakfast, Vernon, and go to the office. Your Uncle Albert will be so vexed if you are late."

Nothing but the troubled look in the faded blue

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eyes, the anxious expression on the placid old face would have made Vernon turn back to the table instead of dashing to the music room.

"How do you think you will like office work?" asked Kitty as she pushed her cup to Aunt Susanne for more coffee.

He looked up from his grapefruit with a grimace. "I shall loathe it! I loathe all business! But I shall love the hundred thousand I shall get for obeying Uncle Albert's silly orders. Once my fingers are on that money I shall do as I please. There isn't any other way yet that I could earn a hundred thousand in a year," he added modestly.

"No, I don't think there is," she laughed, and then her face sobered. "But if you want that money so much you should earn it, Vern. If you don't do your part you can't expect Uncle Albert to do his. Suppose he should fine you when you are late and loaf on your job? How much of your hundred thousand would you get then?"

He looked up quickly. "The dickens! Has he said anything about such a fiendish scheme?"

"If you had been here ten minutes earlier you could have driven down with your uncle," Aunt Susanne told him with regret, while Kitty only looked impish and refused to tell what Uncle Albert had said to her.

"I might have gone down last night." Vernon shook his head as Katie offered him bacon and eggs. "Nothing more, thanks!"

Aunt Susanne was horrified at his meager meal. Possibly it was the contrast to George's more ample breakfast which made it seem meager to her. "You will be hungry before lunch," she warned him. She

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hated to have him go into the business world insufficiently nourished.

He laughed. "It's rather good to have some one care whether I go hungry or not." And when he pushed back his chair he stopped and patted her plump shoulder. "Want me to try and play the dance of the sun on the snow before I go?"

"Dear boy, no! I want you to go as quickly as you can. I don't want any more trouble than we have to have. I should like our home to be peaceful."

"Would it be a home then?" he asked cynically. "Good-by. I hope I live through the day, but I have my doubts."

"Dear boy!" Aunt Susanne had succumbed to his charm as every woman did sooner or later.

"Big goose," corrected Kitty. "He should think of some one besides himself. If he doesn't carry out Uncle Albert's conditions we shall all suffer with him."

"He'll carry them out," promised Aunt Susanne rashly. "You'll see." She smiled encouragement at Kitty. "And what shall we do, my dear, while our men are working?"

Kitty had been rather appalled when she awoke that morning by the long day which stretched before her and which was absolutely empty. What should she do with it? Kitty, like good Queen Charlotte, quarreled with Time, it was so short to do something and so long to do nothing. She thought now that she might as well give the day to Aunt Susanne as to throw it away but she felt very generous as she asked: "What would you like to do?"

"Shop!" Aunt Susanne spoke explosively as if the word had been hanging on her lips just waiting for Kitty's generosity to be released. "I feel like Noah's

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sister." She looked discontentedly at her neat black serge. "I want some clothes, some stylish ones. Albert told me to get what we needed."

"We?" questioned Kitty, and her eyes sparkled. It might be interesting to fill her empty day with new clothes, at least it would be a new way for her to fill a day. She had always packed her shopping between her duties.

"Yes, we," smiled Aunt Susanne. "Your Uncle Albert is a very generous man, Kitty. We are to get what we want and send the bills to him."

But Kitty did not burst into any pæan of gratitude over Uncle Albert's generosity. She sniffed at it. "That isn't generosity," she said. "That's family pride. He wants his family to look as well as his neighbor's family."

"He wants you to have what you wish," insisted Aunt Susanne. "And I shall tell you something I should like, Kitty," she confided with a faint blush. "I want a shampoo and a facial massage and a manicure at a real beauty shop. I have never even seen a beauty shop," she confessed with shame.

"You haven't!" Kitty laughed at her chaperon. "Well, you never can begin younger."

"That is what I think. And it is so important for a lady to make the best of her appearance. I don't think you make the best of yourself, Kitty," she said timidly. "You really have better features than Sybil, but Sybil looks more fashionable than you do."

"I should think she would. Why, Syb spends hours on herself, just hours. She thinks her looks are the most important thing in the world." Kitty could not have agreed with Sybil because she spoke very scornfully of Sybil's thought.



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the middle of the night because Henry Clark dared you to do it."

Uncle Albert stared at her indignantly. Reminiscences were out of place at that moment, and Sue should have known it.

"That has nothing to do with this outrageous performance of George's," he said stiffly.

"No, of course it hasn't," she meekly agreed.

The heavy silence enveloped them again, but in a second it was broken by the shrieks and wails which had wakened Uncle Albert.

"What is that noise?" he demanded testily, while George slipped away munching his cooky. "What is the matter with those children?"

"It is the usual effect of capital on the proletariat," Bert explained with a sarcastic grin.

This was not the time for socialist discussion any more than it was a time for reminiscence, and Uncle Albert very properly turned his back to Bert.

"What is the matter with those children?" he asked Aunt Susanne in a manner which demanded a prompt and intelligent reply.

"They have a stomach ache." Aunt Susanne put Bert's explanation into words which Uncle Albert could understand at that hour of the morning.

"Stomach ache," he repeated feebly.

"Too much ice cream and cake. Children often have stomach ache," Aunt Susanne said reassuringly.

"Yes," chuckled Kitty. "It's a feature of every home!"

"Go to bed!" thundered Uncle Albert, and he turned away and crept into his old, carved mahogany bed and pulled the eiderdown over his head. He was almost sorry that he had ever decided to make one

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last effort to waken the sleeping dogs in his young people. They showed such a sad lack of appreciation of his efforts. Stomach ache, indeed! And that limb—young George! He would see him in the—Uncle Albert's breath caught snoringly in his nose, and he forgot all about young George.

Uncle Albert had quite looked forward to meeting his family around the breakfast table when they would discuss in a pleasant, happy fashion their plans for the day. But when he came into the sunny breakfast room there was no one there but a trim maid. Uncle Albert was already five minutes late, and he would not have waited another second for the King of England. He sat down to the table and picked up the morning paper, but he had to rise stiffly to say good-morning to Aunt Susanne. Behind Aunt Susanne was young George, who looked at Uncle Albert suspiciously. Uncle Albert looked at him with more than suspicion, but he only grunted and muttered that he was glad that some one thought that he should not breakfast alone.

"Where are the others?" he demanded as if Aunt Susanne had personal charge of them. "Vernon will be late at the office. And Bert! Just like a socialist to loaf in bed all day. Where are Kitty and Sybil? No sense in beginning the day wrong!"

"Sybil wants a tray in her room, but Kitty will be down presently," Aunt Susanne explained. "Bert had breakfast with the twins. He said if he didn't have breakfast with them he would never see them except on Sundays and holidays, and he doesn't want them to forget they have a father."

"Humph! If he plans to do a decent day's work he'd better get down at once."

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"He's gone. He wouldn't wait for you. He said it would look better for a factory hand to go to work in the police patrol car than in a limousine. He went out as I came down."

"He did?" Uncle Albert was nonplused. "I don't know but he is right. There are too many cars parked around the factories. You can let Sybil sleep this morning, but to-morrow I want her to eat breakfast with me. I'm not going to have her up all night to sleep all day. It's not a normal way to do. And you, young man," he looked at George, who had been working his way steadily through fruit, two dishes of cereal with cream and a generous portion of bacon and eggs and was happily engaged with hot cakes and maple syrup. "You get your cap. I'll leave you at school myself."

"You might let me have something to eat," grumbled George, who felt resentful at Uncle Albert, who had taken him from a school where he knew that the Latin master never looked at the written translations he demanded, but swept them into the waste-paper basket as soon as the class was dismissed, and that his English master invariably assigned the special topics to every fourth boy. Such knowledge was priceless to a student, and George deeply resented the fact that he would have to begin again in a school where the habits and idiosyncrasies of the masters were unknown to him. "I don't want to go to school on an empty stomach," he muttered.

"Empty stomach!" Uncle Albert had played with his grapefruit, pushed his cereal aside and nibbled at a piece of bacon and a bit of toast. Uncle Albert did not know what the word "breakfast" meant. "Your stomach can't be empty. Get your cap."

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"Let the poor child eat his breakfast, Albert," begged Aunt Susanne. "I don't want him to come home in the middle of the morning with a headache. What will you have, George?"

"I'd like some more cakes," answered George. "And another piece of bacon."

Uncle Albert pushed back his chair. "You don't need any more cakes nor any more bacon. You get your cap. Oh, eat them, if you must! But hurry. I've got to get down town before night!"

Aunt Susanne fluttered after him out to the hall where Hoskins stood with Uncle Albert's hat and coat.

"I hope you will have a happy day, Albert," Aunt Susanne said pleasantly. "It's a beautiful morning."

Uncle Albert glanced out of the window. The morning had not been beautiful to him, but it was quite according to his idea that the mistress of a home should speed her men to work with a smile and a pleasant word, and so he smiled grimly.

"Thank you, Sue!" Perhaps Sue would not prove as unsatisfactory as he had feared last night. "I hope you will have a pleasant day yourself. Is that you, Kitty?" As she came down the stairs. "You are late. I don't want it to happen again. I believe that a family should breakfast as a family. Any thing you want, Sue?" The question was an involuntary one and showed that Uncle Albert was indeed a proper family man. He was at the door before Aunt Susanne could answer him. "Send George out at once," he called back.

Aunt Susanne turned with an odd little smile to find Hoskins looking at her.

"This is quite a change for you, Hoskins," she said frankly. "To have a family to look after."

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"Yes, Mrs. Ellsworth, it is," he answered as frankly. "But it isn't the change for me that it is for Mr. Galusha. You see, I've lived in families before, and he never has."

Before Kitty had finished her grapefruit Vernon came in looking quite as romantic by broad sunlight as he had by the rose-shaded electric glow.

"Good-morning, relatives," he began cheerily, and then he caught a glimpse of the frost-powdered world outside of the casement windows. "My word!" he exclaimed, cutting his greeting short so that he could walk to the window and look across the lawn where every branch and sprig of the shrubbery had been transformed into fluffy white feathers and sprinkled with diamonds. Even the tall trees were powdered with jewels. "My word!" he exclaimed with a deep breath. "What a world!"

"It is beautiful," agreed Aunt Susanne. "But, Vernon, my dear, I thought you were going to work in your uncle's office to-day?"

"So I am," Vernon said absently, as he stood and looked at the beautiful world spread out before him. "But I didn't plan to begin before daylight. Get the play of the sun on that snowbank, Kit? Doesn't it sing to you?" And he began to hum the play the sunbeams sang to him. "Doesn't it go like that? I'll show you!" He glanced about as if he expected to find a piano in Uncle Albert's breakfast room, and he would have dashed to the music room if Aunt Susanne had not stopped him.

"Please eat your breakfast, Vernon, and go to the office. Your Uncle Albert will be so vexed if you are late."

Nothing but the troubled look in the faded blue

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eyes, the anxious expression on the placid old face would have made Vernon turn back to the table instead of dashing to the music room.

"How do you think you will like office work?" asked Kitty as she pushed her cup to Aunt Susanne for more coffee.

He looked up from his grapefruit with a grimace. "I shall loathe it! I loathe all business! But I shall love the hundred thousand I shall get for obeying Uncle Albert's silly orders. Once my fingers are on that money I shall do as I please. There isn't any other way yet that I could earn a hundred thousand in a year," he added modestly.

"No, I don't think there is," she laughed, and then her face sobered. "But if you want that money so much you should earn it, Vern. If you don't do your part you can't expect Uncle Albert to do his. Suppose he should fine you when you are late and loaf on your job? How much of your hundred thousand would you get then?"

He looked up quickly. "The dickens! Has he said anything about such a fiendish scheme?"

"If you had been here ten minutes earlier you could have driven down with your uncle," Aunt Susanne told him with regret, while Kitty only looked impish and refused to tell what Uncle Albert had said to her.

"I might have gone down last night." Vernon shook his head as Katie offered him bacon and eggs. "Nothing more, thanks!"

Aunt Susanne was horrified at his meager meal. Possibly it was the contrast to George's more ample breakfast which made it seem meager to her. "You will be hungry before lunch," she warned him. She

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"Maybe a girl's looks aren't the most important thing, but they aren't the least important thing, either. Remember that, Kitty. Shall we ask Sybil to go with us?"

"She would be more of a help than I shall."

But Sybil was still asleep in her ivory bed, which was painted with garlands of blue and yellow flowers, and they did not waken her. They stopped to see Bud and Sis, who had forgotten all about the stomach ache which had helped to ruin the family night and were happily playing in the big nursery with a starched white nurse to help them.

"We should buy clothes for the kiddies, too," suggested Kitty, aware instantly that Bud and Sis were not in sartorial harmony with their nursery. "They certainly look like Uncle Albert's poor relations instead of members of his happy family."

Although she had always spoken scornfully of women who spent their time and money on fallals,—silly peacocks, she called them—Kitty quite enjoyed shopping with Aunt Susanne. It was vastly pleasanter to go into an exclusive shop with unlimited credit than it was to slip into a department store with a lean purse. And Aunt Susanne was so anxious for the last cry of Fashion that she was amusing.

"If you had been out of style all of your life you would want to be in style when you had the chance." Aunt Susanne laughed at herself.

It was lunch time before they knew it. When Kitty suggested that they should lunch in the popular Viking room at the Waloo Hotel Aunt Susanne exclaimed at once: "Let us!"

At the entrance to the Waloo they met Arthur Parkyn, who hurried to them as if they were long-

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lost relatives for whom he had hunted around the world.

"Hello!" he said happily. "It seems a hundred thousand years since I saw you, Kitty Forsythe!"

"Time has dragged for you. I want to introduce you to my chaperon, Arthur." She laughed at her chaperon. It was so ridiculous for a girl of to-day to have a chaperon.

Arthur shot a quick, questioning look at Aunt Susanne. A chaperon might be such an unpleasant, disobliging person, but Aunt Susanne did not look unpleasant nor disobliging. She just looked friendly and pleasant, and she offered him a very cordial hand.

"I am glad to meet one of Kitty's friends," she said in a very cordial voice. "I hope we shall see you often at Kitty's new home."

"You shall!" he quickly promised. "Thank you very much for the kind hope. Are you going to lunch here? Won't you be my guests?"

Aunt Susanne looked at Kitty, and Kitty nodded.

"Arthur can amply afford to lunch us," she told Aunt Susanne in a stage whisper. "We accept your kind invitation with pleasure, Mr. Parkyn," she told Arthur with charming formality.

"Hurrah!" grinned Mr. Parkyn anything but formally.

All through luncheon in the gay and crowded Viking room where Arthur was fortunate enough to procure the most desirable table, Aunt Susanne watched Kitty and studied Arthur. It was her duty to watch and study, but she could not understand either Kitty or Arthur. When she was Kitty's age she never would have dared to talk to a man as Kitty talked to Arthur. And Arthur's manner to Kitty had none of the tender



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deference and respectful courtesy which Aunt Susanne had been taught a young man should show a young woman. They might be two boys laughing and talking together, she decided.

"You know every one in Waloo," Kitty had said when the luncheon was ordered. "Point out the notables to our friend from Manitou."

And Arthur kindly called Aunt Susanne's attention to the president of Waloo College and to an actor from New York, a star of the first magnitude who was twinkling in Waloo for a week, and to Waloo's only professional diplomat who was home from Chile on leave, and to the soprano of Nazareth Church and to the débutante daughter of the president of the Waloo National Bank.

"Muriel Abercrombie!" Kitty pricked up her ears and turned her head. "She is to be my model. Uncle Albert gave her to me for a pattern."

"No!" Arthur could never believe that any Uncle Albert would choose Muriel Abercrombie as a pattern for Kitty.

"He has!" giggled Kitty. "Reckless old dear! Go on, Arthur. Who else is here to-day?"

"That talk dark man near the door is an Italian over here on some art stuff."

"Art stuff?" repeated Kitty vaguely. A faint remembrance of something concerning Italy and art was somewhere in her mental closet but she could not find it in a minute. "Be more explicit, Arthur Parkyn. What do you mean by art stuff?"

"Just that. Art stuff. That's all I know, Kit. Your Uncle Albert can probably make it clearer if you ask him nicely. He knows all about art, doesn't he?"

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"I suppose so!" Kitty looked at the tall dark man near the door. "I don't like him," she decided as she gathered her gloves and bag in her hand. "And now," she changed the subject with a chuckle, "we are going to be made into raving, tearing beauties!"

"That will be all right with me," declared Arthur with more of the lack of consciousness which puzzled Aunt Susanne. "You know, Kitty, I've always told you that you would be a peach if you would pay half as much attention to the outside of your head as you did to the inside."

Kitty made a face at him. "We shall see. Thank you very much for our luncheon. We are very glad we met you."

Aunt Susanne also thanked him for the luncheon, and asked him again to come and see them.

"I shall," he promised eagerly. "You will probably find me on the step when you reach home. I want to see if I am right about the outside of Kitty's head. I am very grateful to her chaperon, Mrs. Ellsworth, because she has impressed Kitty with the fact that she has a face to be taken care of as well as a brain to be cultivated. Good-by."

"What a charming young fellow!" Aunt Susanne murmured as they drove from the Waloo to the beauty shop.

"Arthur? Oh, Arthur is all right," agreed Kitty before she contradicted herself. "No, he isn't all right, Aunt Susanne! He really is the most old-fashioned thing. Makes you think of Noah and Methuselah and Uncle Albert and all the other old fogies. He doesn't agree with me on even one of the big questions."

"He doesn't!" But Aunt Susanne scarcely heard

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her, for they had reached the House of Beauty, and Aunt Susanne was all in a flutter. "I suppose I am a big fool, Kitty Forsythe, to be coming here at my age, but I don't think a woman should look a day older than she has to look. You'll think that too when you are sixty years old."

"Sixty!" murmured Kitty, and she doubted if she ever would be sixty years old. Why she would have to live forever first!

## VIII

WHEN Uncle Albert left his office at the end of the day's work he found a little figure curled in the corner of his limousine, a most attractive little creature in smart wistaria duvetyn and gray squirrel and with a smart French hat alluringly veiled.

"Why, Sybil!" exclaimed Uncle Albert with a smile of pleasure. "It was very nice of you to drive down for me."

"I wanted to come," murmured Sybil. "I want to do such a lot for you, Uncle Albert. You are doing so much for me!" Gratitude fairly oozed from her big blue eyes.

"H-m," muttered Uncle Albert, who was better at stocks and bonds than at repartee. He looked oddly at Sybil before he smiled again and patted her hand and said encouragingly, "That's right! That's right!"

"I'm sure we are going to be awfully happy together in your beautiful home," went on Sybil in her soft, gentle voice, her fingers curling around Uncle Albert's gnarled old knuckles. "It was such a wonderful idea to bring us all together, Uncle Albert. And the home you are giving us is so wonderful, too. Honestly, I never did care much for my own home. It is in such a poky little town, you know. Nothing ever happened there. And a girl just couldn't stand it! But a home in a city is wonderful! There are so many things to do in a city. I just know we are going to have the most gorgeous times!" She was full of admiration and affection as she clung to Uncle Albert's fingers.

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Uncle Albert looked at her oddly again. "I hope so," he mumbled. "I want to give my girls a good time."

"And you can! The best times girls ever had! Don't you think we could have a party soon, next week, perhaps? A dinner dance? I love a dinner dance. And the art gallery would be a corking place to dance. Not a big party," she hastily explained when she saw a frown on Uncle Albert's face as he understood that Sybil was dissatisfied already. Why she had not been a member of his family for twenty-four hours and she wanted a party. No wonder Uncle Albert frowned.

"I want my friends to know what a perfectly wonderful uncle I have," Sybil murmured wooingly, and she patted the hand of her wonderful uncle.

Uncle Albert was like other men, no more susceptible to flattery and no less, so he smiled sheepishly and this time he did pat her gloved fingers.

"Perhaps we can manage a little informal party," he grunted. "We can ask Sue."

"Isn't she a funny old dear?" laughed Sybil. "Where do you suppose she got all of her advanced ideas when she has always lived in a little town? She is almost as bad as Kitty. They are as thick as thieves already. They have been away together all day."

"They have!" Uncle Albert frowned again, blacker now, for it was not according to his idea of a home to have the women of his family away from it all day. Why did he provide a home if his women would not stay in it?

"They weren't back when I left," went on Sybil purringly. "I was glad to stay in the pretty room you gave me. It's beautiful!" She drew a long breath of

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admiration. "And I played with the twinnies and helped your housekeeper plan the dinner. It seemed to me that some one of the family should take an interest in it. I hope you will like it!" Sybil did not tell him that her help had consisted in telling Mrs. Merrill to order her favorite meringue ice cream.

"Little home maker!" How womanly and sweet Sybil was! He was right. His girls at heart were womanly. Just give them the right environment and they would be as sweet and refined and gentle as their mothers and their grandmothers. "That's fine!" he told Sybil.

"You'll speak to Aunt Susanne about the party, won't you?" Sybil ran her hand under his arm as they walked into the house. "I mean tell her I can have it? I'll plan everything," she offered eagerly. "I want to learn to be a perfect hostess!" She seemed hungry to learn.

"That's right!" She had pleased him, and he let her see that she had. "A lady should know how to be a gracious hostess. I'll talk to Sue."

"You old dear!" And she stood on tiptoe so that she could touch his forehead with her lips.

Uncle Albert's eyes followed her as she danced away—to make herself pretty for dinner, she said. What a good little girl she was, obedient and thoughtful and unselfish, staying at home to look after the twins while Sue and Kitty were gadding. And looking after his dinner! Oh, well, he supposed it was too much to expect perfection in all of them at once. He should be thankful to have one obedient, thoughtful, and unselfish member in his family. And then he shook his head, for Bert and Vernon had not shown much thoughtfulness, nor much obedience that first

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day they worked for Uncle Albert. The factory manager had thought that Bert might shape into something if he would use his hands more than his tongue, but Vernon—Vernon had done nothing but sharpen his pencil. They might work out all right yet. Perhaps it was too soon to expect any great change. Thoughtful of little Sybil to drive down for him. Just what a daughter would have done. He had seen Muriel Abercrombie waiting for her father in front of the bank building. Yes, it was nice of Sybil. Little monkey!

Kitty wore one of her new frocks down to dinner, a blue charmeuse made very plain but so beautiful in line and quality that it transformed Kitty into an entirely new woman and showed the lines of her pretty figure which had been hidden by her old satin. Aunt Susanne's gown was of purple velvet and she looked as you would imagine a dowager duchess would look. The beauty shop had done mysterious and marvelous things to their hair and their skin, so that Uncle Albert looked at them twice to make sure that they really were members of his family.

"Well! well!" he said admiringly. "The rest is doing you good, Kitty. I never saw you look better."

"Rest!" Kitty tilted her nose. "Rest would never produce such results, Uncle Albert, not if I rested a thousand years. It is money which has made me over, not rest."

"And Sue!" Uncle Albert blinked as he turned his eyes to Aunt Susanne. "You look fine, more as you used to look," he told her.

"I feel fine," Aunt Susanne said serenely.

"And, Sue, I told Sybil she could have a little party, just a few of her friends. The child seemed to want

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one. It won't be any trouble for you. Sybil will plan everything and ask her friends."

"I hope Kitty may ask some of her friends!" For some reason Aunt Susanne was dissatisfied because Sybil had gone alone to meet Uncle Albert and to ask him for a party. "The sly boots!" she thought. "That young lady will bear watching or I miss my guess."

The sly boots was radiant in her green satin which she told Uncle Albert was an old rag and not to be compared to Kitty's new charmeuse nor Aunt Susanne's velvet. She hoped he didn't just hate to look at anything so awfully ancient. Uncle Albert laughed indulgently and told her to go down and buy herself a new gown in the morning.

"You generous dear!" Sybil was enchanted, and she sat beside her generous dear and talked to him in a low voice about her party until Hoskins came in to announce that Mr. Arthur Parkyn had called.

"Arthur Parkyn!" Sybil sprang to her feet, her face scarlet. "Arthur Parkyn!" she repeated as if she could not believe that it actually was Arthur Parkyn who had called.

"Parkyn? Who is Arthur Parkyn?" demanded Uncle Albert fumbling for his glasses so that he might read the card on Hoskins's tray.

"He is a friend of mine," explained Kitty. "He entertained Aunt Susanne and me at lunch to-day, and Aunt Susanne asked him to come and see us."

"Lunch!" Sybil turned to her with an unbelieving stare. "He had you and Aunt Susanne to lunch? And you never asked me! You went off and left me alone all day! Oh, I do think you were mean—mean!" Her face was crimson, and her eyes flashed angrily.



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"Sybil!" Aunt Susanne was aghast at Sybil's furious outbreak. "You were asleep when we left."

"You could have wakened me. You knew I would rather lunch with Arthur Parkyn than sleep forever. I like him better than any man I ever met!" she told them frankly. "I'll go and tell him— Why Kitty's gone! The mean thing! And she never said a word! But she can't keep him by herself, can she, Uncle Albert? She will have to bring him in here! You want to meet him, don't you, Uncle Albert? I'll tell Kitty."

She would have darted away to tell Kitty if Kitty had not appeared with Arthur, who nodded carelessly to Sybil, but she rushed forward to take his hand and tell him how glad she was that he had come to see her and how much she wanted him to meet her dear Uncle Albert.

"This is Arthur Parkyn, Uncle Albert." She spoke as though Arthur Parkyn belonged to her and to no one else.

Kitty's eyes widened, but she said nothing as Uncle Albert shook hands with Arthur. If Arthur wanted to let Sybil make a fool of him that was his privilege. Sybil was just the type of girl he said he liked. Sybil did not care about the emancipation of women. Why, Sybil might be the ideal which Arthur had described to her on every possible occasion. My goodness gracious! That was a disturbing thought. Kitty stared from Sybil to Arthur. But it was ridiculous to think that Arthur was anything but disgusted with Sybil's eager appropriation. Why, Arthur was her friend! She was glad to hear Aunt Susanne's gentle, serene voice.

"I am very glad you accepted my invitation at once,"

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Aunt Susanne said in a way which made Arthur her guest and took him from Sybil.

He turned to her quickly. He really had been a little embarrassed by the warmth of Sybil's greeting. "Of course I came at once. How did you like——" He stopped and looked at her and then at Kitty. "I knew I was right, Kitty!" he exclaimed jubilantly. "I knew you could look like Venus and Helen of Troy and Mary Stuart and all the other beauties if you only wanted to."

Kitty flushed and looked prettier than before. "Arthur, you are an idiot!" she said, but his admiration pleased her. Her pink cheeks and bright eyes told him that it did.

"Come over here, Arthur," called Sybil with pretty peremptoriness. "I am going to call you Arthur, if you don't mind? You are such a friend of Kitty's, and Kitty is my own second cousin, you know. We are going to be great friends, too, aren't we? The very best of friends!" She looked deep into his eyes. "I want you to help Uncle Albert and me. We are planning a party."

"You young people plan it," suggested Uncle Albert hastily. "I haven't had any experience with parties."

"I have!" Sybil was prettily proud of her experience. "And Arthur has, too. What music shall we have, Arthur?" She moved closer to him and peered up into his face. "I want the best jazz band in town. Come here and let us plan!" And she patted the sofa beside her invitingly.

"Godfrey!" muttered Uncle Albert to Aunt Susanne, "is that the way girls act now? You would have died, Sue, when you were her age, before you

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would have shown you liked a man like that. I don't approve of it! I know I'm old-fashioned, but I like a girl to be modest and a little reserved."

"I don't like it either." Aunt Susanne sighed as she looked at Kitty, who was sitting on the other side of the room staring at Sybil and Arthur with startled eyes. Kitty did not look as if she liked it any more than Aunt Susanne did.

And Kitty's looks told the truth. She did not like it. Why—why how funny for Arthur to let Sybil take such complete possession of him when she was there in her new blue charmeuse and with her hair done the new way. Before she had time to let her surprise grow into indignation Vernon called to her from the piano.

"Kit, does this make you think of the dance of the sunbeams on the snow this morning? You know I told you they sang to me. The air bothered me so that I wasn't able to give my whole mind to Uncle Albert's work to-day!" He grinned impudently at Uncle Albert. "The sunbeams dancing on the snow, you know. Listen!"

Uncle Albert looked from Vernon and Kitty at the piano to Sybil and Arthur on the sofa, and he nodded his bald head. That was the way he would have the world, neatly assorted in couples. He was so well pleased with his girls that he forgot to be shocked because Vernon had been unable to put his whole mind on his work. This was the way it was meant to be, every young girl with a young man. If Kitty had a lot of attention from men she would forget all about politics. Of course she would! What were votes to a girl who had lovers?

George ambled in from a movie which he declared had been rotten, a word which made Aunt Susanne

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and Uncle Albert, too, shudder. George had a paper bag in his hand, and he generously offered to share its contents, hot buttered popcorn, with them.

"Take that disgusting stuff away!" ordered Uncle Albert sharply. "You'll get it over everything!"

"Aw, what kind of a home is this!" mumbled George, tramping out of the room with his paper bag. "A fella can't eat anywhere in peace!"

Bert came down from his room, where he had been making notes for his study of Uncle Albert. But the notes had contradicted his theories so roundly that he had torn them up and decided to begin again. He joined Kitty and Vernon at the piano and there was much chatter and laughter.

From the sofa at the other end of the living room Arthur saw Kitty the center of a group which was two-thirds masculine, and the attention which Sybil had held wavered. He answered her soft, purring voice at random and scarcely heard her when she asked if he knew that she was the first girl to fox trot in Waloo.

"I wish we could dance now!" She jumped up eagerly. "Can't we, Uncle Albert? This floor is gorgeous, and Vern will play for us. Won't you, Vern?" She turned her glowing little face to Vernon.

"I never play jazz!" declared Vernon indignantly.

"Let Vernon play for us to sing," suggested Uncle Albert genially. "We used to like to sing when we were young, didn't we, Sue? 'Clementina' and 'My Bonnie Lies over the Ocean.'" He hummed the old air.

"That old stuff!" Sybil made a face. "No, we want to dance. Don't we, Arthur? And Vern can play so

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beautifully. He has such a wonderful feeling for rhythm, haven't you, Vernie?" She ran to bend over him as he sat at the piano and to look so coaxingly into his face that he laughed impatiently and struck the opening chords of the most popular one-step. "You duck!" Sybil ran her fingers over his cheek and whirled down to the living room. "Now, Arthur Parkyn, let us show them what we can do!"

Kitty had an odd feeling in the upper left-hand corner of her chest when she saw Sybil snatch Arthur from her, and her eyes flashed as she watched them. Both were good dancers, and Vernon put a spell into his music. Even Bert caught his breath and exclaimed:

"By George! I don't see why I can't learn that! I need exercise. A man has to have some exercise!"

Kitty laughed, and the odd feeling in her chest disappeared. She had heard Bert's views on dancing before and they had never been expressed with such warm approval and envy. "Of course he does," she agreed. "Want me to teach you?"

"Let me!" gasped Sybil, looking prettier than ever in her breathless pinkiness. "See! This way." She drew back her short green skirt and counted the steps. "See! I love to teach people to dance! It is the one thing I can do to perfection. And it is real missionary work!"

"Huh!" It was Uncle Albert who snorted at Sybil's idea of missionary work. Aunt Susanne just smiled.

Sybil whirled. "I shall teach you, too, Uncle Albert Galusha! Yes, I shall!" She caught Uncle Albert's hand and tried to draw him toward her. "Lots of men older than you are have learned to dance

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his year. Just keep your eyes on my feet," she ordered. "You'll love it! I could die dancing!"

"You won't die to-night!" Vernon sounded a crashing chord and jumped up from the piano. "That's enough, young woman. At least it is all you'll get!"

"Oh, Vern!" She pouted. "Can't any one else play? Kitty, Aunt Susanne? Vern, I think you are horrid. Just as I was going to teach Uncle Albert!"

"Uncle Albert can hire an orchestra if he wants to learn," Vernon remarked carelessly as he lit a cigarette.

Perhaps it was the careless remark which made Uncle Albert exclaim testily: "There is a smoking room, Vernon, if you must smoke!"

"I thought a man could smoke anywhere in his home," retorted Vernon. "Come on, Bert. I'll beat you at a game of pool."

When Arthur left, Kitty followed him into the hall. Sybil would have followed him, also, if Aunt Susanne had not forcibly detained her by catching her short sleeve and asking her about her party.

"What a bully time we've had!" Arthur said as he took his hat from Hoskins. "I say, Kit, you aren't as unlucky as you thought you would be. That little Sybil dances like a breeze!"

"Does she!" Kitty spoke stiffly. There was quite a bit of starch in her voice.

"You're not sorry now you came, are you, old girl?" went on Arthur pleasantly. "You wouldn't go back to your old league, would you? I'm darned glad you left it! And you can't spend a year with a woman like Mrs. Ellsworth—any one can see she is the real stuff!—and a girl like Sybil Molyneaux without understand-

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ing what I have always said about this independent bug. We'll be thinking the same thing before you can say Jack Robinson," he prophesied with a pleasant smile.

"It would be more to the point if you would try and see my side!" She was furious at his hint that she could learn anything from Sybil. Little empty-headed vanity!

"Try!" He was wounded to the quick. "As if I hadn't tried! I've read all the stuff you gave me and heard all the lectures you took me to! I've been open-minded as a man could be. It hurts me, Kitty, to hear you insinuate that I haven't tried. May I try again to-morrow? You don't think it will be too soon? Sybil asked me to come. And you know you want to see me just as often as I can," he added tardily.

"Do you?" Her eyes mocked him. "Sure, come to-morrow and the day after, too. I have no doubt Sybil will dance with you." There was a sharp edge to her voice which made him wince as if it had hit him.

"Surely you don't care if I dance with your little cousin?" He couldn't believe that she did. "I'd rather dance with you. You know that."

She was ashamed of her attack of "green fever" and she hastened to hide the symptoms from him. "Yes, I know," she agreed. "But you must go now. Hoskins will be tired waiting to let you out. We'll see you to-morrow!"

He looked from the butler at the door to Kitty, laughing under the light and grinned as he took her of her hands.

"Darn it," he whispered. "I don't think this is a

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nd of a home at all. We might as well be in the bby of the Waloo. There seems to be no privacy : all!"

Sybil looked up as Kitty came back to the living om.

"Isn't Arthur Parkyn a dear?" she asked eagerly. He dances perfectly! I've been crazy about him ever nce I met him at Mollie Greenly's mush and milk arty!"

"Mush and milk party?" questioned Uncle Albert. What is a mush and milk party? Mush and milk ounds like an old-fashioned breakfast."

"That's what it is," Sybil explained a little impa- ntly. "A breakfast party at Mollie's studio. I do pe Arthur will come to-morrow, Kitty. I do like m awfully!"

Uncle Albert snorted. In his day refined young dies did not express their liking for a man with such verish emphasis any more than they went to break- ist parties of mush and milk.

"Lucky Parkyn," murmured Vernon, strolling back om his game with Bert. "But don't poach on your ousin Kitty's preserves, my dear Sybil!"

"Kitty! Kitty doesn't care for men. She only res for votes!" But Sybil swung around to make re that Kitty only cared for votes. "Are you en- aged to Arthur Parkyn?" she asked bluntly.

Kitty hesitated between a desire to tell the truth nd claim the fascinating Arthur and a yearning to sk Sybil what difference it made to her whether she as or wasn't. "Not exactly," she said slowly and uthfully, because it was so much easier for her to tell ie truth than it was to evade it.

"Not exactly!" exploded Uncle Albert.



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"Just what do you mean by that, my dear?" questioned Aunt Susanne, the chaperon.

Kitty moved impatiently and tried to remember that a family thought it had a right to an interest in a girl's affairs, but it would be difficult to make these older people understand. She threw back her head and did her best to make the situation clear.

"We probably would be engaged if we could think alike on the big, vital questions. But I never would marry a man who doesn't agree with me on the most important things in the world!"

Uncle Albert looked grave. So did Aunt Susanne. What did Kitty mean? Sybil asked her.

"What on earth do you mean by that?" she demanded.

"He doesn't believe in the freedom of women!" Kitty flushed as she told them what she meant. "He hasn't a single modern idea!" She was so ashamed for Arthur that she blushed.

"God bless my soul!" muttered Uncle Albert, and he stared at his young relative.

"Oh, lordy!" giggled Sybil, rising to the tips of her satin toes. "What do you care about the freedom of women when you can have a man like Arthur Parkyn? I'd rather have a lover than a vote any day!"

Although Uncle Albert quite agreed with Sybil that lovers were far more suitable to a girl than votes there was something in Sybil's balancing little body in its green satin sheath, in the excited scarlet face, which shocked him, and he exclaimed rebukingly, "Sybil!"

Sybil took a dancing step and waved her hand to him. "I should!" she insisted. "And I give Kitty fair warning, in the presence of the family, that

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agree perfectly with Arthur Parkyn on all the big, vital questions!" She mimicked Kitty with a giggle. "Better look out, Kitty Forsythe!" she said warningly. "I'm the red flag of danger! You'll see!"

## IX

FOR almost forty years Uncle Albert had had little to do with young people. Indeed, Uncle Albert had had very little to do with any one but half a dozen men as old as himself. He had found his amusement in his collections. If he wanted something which the pictures and the porcelains would not give him, he would drop in at the Waloo Club and take a corner known as the millionaires' retreat, where he could discuss weighty matters of finance or grumble at the times. Young people were employed in his office and his home. He saw shoals of them on the street as he drove by. But he had not come in close contact with any of them, so he had had scant sympathy with his friends when they murmured helplessly, as they frequently did: "I don't see what the world is coming to!"

You cannot thoroughly comprehend what you know only by sight, and Uncle Albert should not have expected to understand his young people as soon as he had them under his roof. After he had been horrified at Kitty's independence and disgusted with Sybil's foolishness, he found himself all ears when he approached a group of girls in the office, and he would shake his head when he caught snatches of their talk—"The Matthews road bill——", "It's the only lipstick!——" "Minimum wage law——" "The swellest fox trot!——" No, Uncle Albert did not understand young people. They seemed irresponsible, rude, and stubborn to him, lacking in all of the fine

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courtesy which made life a pleasure instead of a burden. And especially did he fail to understand Bert and Kitty. Sybil had a faint family resemblance to the girls of his own youth, only she did exaggerate everything so disgustingly. Vernon—well, a sensible man did not try to understand a 'cello player. So far as Uncle Albert could learn Vernon was absolutely useless in the office. Unless Uncle Albert drove Vernon down himself in the morning Vernon was always late, which set a very bad example to the rest of the staff. Vernon had been placed in the transportation department where there was nothing suggestive of music. Uncle Albert had made a point of that. George—Uncle Albert's imagination which men who knew publicly declared was the big factor in his success and in the development of the Northwest, refused to tell him what his parents would have done if they had been confronted with a problem named George, who was two-thirds appetite and one-third rebel. George actually had no idea of the property rights of others. He did not hesitate to borrow Uncle Albert's sacred razor. Uncle Albert shuddered when he thought what George must have done with his razor. Uncle Albert's handkerchiefs and Vernon's ties were frequently in George's pockets and around George's neck, and more than once Uncle Albert had found incriminating cooky crumbs in the drawers of his desk which George should never have had any occasion to open. George brought a grimy group of friends to see the gallery.

"The Italian government is going to steal the pictures some night," he boasted in a loud whisper. "An' Uncle Albert has a peach of a burglar alarm. I can work it!"

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"Work it now, Stubby!" they begged.

But George had learned something about burglar alarms and only shook his head and said darkly that the Italian government wouldn't find it so easy to steal his Uncle Albert's pictures, not while he was in the house.

George borrowed Uncle Albert's pet Indian war bonnet to take to school and scare his teacher, and he forgot to bring it home again. George tried to smoke the Indian war pipe which Uncle Albert had smoked at a council when he was an Indian trader, and made himself so sick that he frightened Aunt Susanne. Before George had been a member of the family a week he had proved even to Bert that there might be drawbacks to a communal life.

Strangely enough it was Bert, the socialist,—anarchist, Uncle Albert called him with a looseness of phrase which conveyed a very wrong impression,—who showed a grain of sense. Bert had gone to the factory determined to uncover all the unfairness and oppression which must be hidden there and to learn what portion of Uncle Albert's wealth came from his wage slaves, and so he worked with an earnestness which was very gratifying to his old uncle. "Heaven knows what he does behind the foreman's back," Uncle Albert would murmur to his confidante, Aunt Susanne. "I can't think he is as good as he sounds." And he would glower suspiciously at Bert across the dinner table. Dinner was the only meal at which Bert appeared, for he had breakfast with the twins in the nursery and went off by himself, never once waiting for Uncle Albert and his ill-gotten limousine.

But after dinner, still determined to make Uncle Albert into a pocket and turn him inside out, Bert

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would follow Uncle Albert to the library and insist on talking of things in which Uncle Albert had no interest at all, but to which he had to listen. Uncle Albert would frown at Bert's excerpts from Proudhon, Leibknecht, Kropotkin, Marx, Shaw and the rest, but he learned what Bert meant when he talked of syndicalism or guild socialism or class consciousness. Old Uncle Albert knew a lot about labor organizations, the A. F. L. and the I. W. W., but he did not know present-day labor as an individual, and he listened with a frown and occasionally asked a really intelligent question. Bert thought in time he might make quite a pocket out of his old uncle, and he never suspected that Uncle Albert was also turning him inside out.

"I feel as if I were going to school again," Uncle Albert told Aunt Susanne querulously, for he had thought his school days were over. "Only it's young people I have to study instead of books. Perhaps I have given too much time to books."

And Aunt Susanne agreed that Uncle Albert's big marble mansion was like a school arithmetic, full of problems. They were both frankly puzzled by those problems, but with a difference. Aunt Susanne seemed to try to understand them, while Uncle Albert was determined that he never would. His young people should not expect him to try to understand them. They should understand him.

Kitty Forsythe had not one feminine habit that Uncle Albert could discover. She had never learned to sew, she could not cook. She told Uncle Albert and Aunt Susanne vaguely that all she knew of cooking was to put salt in the water when eggs were boiled. She never even darned her own stockings but threw

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them away when there was too much open work to them. Aunt Susanne gasped, and Uncle Albert looked unutterable words.

"What a pity! What a pity!" murmured Aunt Susanne. "And you graduated from college!" She gazed at Kitty as if she did not know whether to blame her for obtaining her diploma under false pretenses or the college for a very defective curriculum. Aunt Susanne thought that education meant more than a passing mark in certain studies chosen by a board of trustees. How could a girl be properly educated if she did not know how to cook and sew and make out a budget and plan menus and furnish a home?

"It isn't too late for you to learn," she told Kitty eagerly. "I can't remember when I learned to sew. My grandmother taught me with patchwork squares. Dear, dear! When I sewed a square to suit her she would give me a peppermint drop."

"That must have been jolly," Kitty was polite enough to say, although she loathed peppermint. "But, Aunt Susanne, can't you see that girls don't have to learn to cook and sew now? The stores are full of ready-made clothes and there is a delicatessen shop or a cafeteria on every corner. I suppose," doubtfully, for she was not sure, "that your education fitted you for your time and," quite confidently, "mine has prepared me for my time. Women don't have to poke around a house as they did before vacuum cleaners and electric washing machines were invented. Houses are run more scientifically now, you know. We're efficient!"

"That's the word that is always on your tongue, Albert," sighed Aunt Susanne. "I don't like it. It sounds like a machine. There isn't a human note in it.

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I think your Uncle Albert would like you to learn to cook and sew, Kitty," she suggested delicately.

Kitty smiled at her Uncle Albert. "Perhaps he would, but I shan't do it!" That was what Uncle Albert objected to so strongly, the words "I shan't." They seemed to appear like a traffic trap whenever he wanted these young people to act in a sane and reasonable manner.

"You could dress a doll for Sis?" Aunt Susanne made the offer as if she were handing Kitty the presidency of the United States on a silver platter.

Kitty laughed. "I never dressed a doll in my life." She made the confession shamelessly.

"You never dressed a doll!" Aunt Susanne could scarcely believe that a little girl could have grown into a big girl without dressing a doll. Really, Kitty had had a strange rearing. If girls of the present day were brought up without dolls Aunt Susanne was almost glad that she had never had a daughter, only if she had had a daughter, that daughter would never have lived twenty-two years without learning to darn stockings or boil eggs or dress dolls. Aunt Susanne was sure of that.

"I was the only girl in the neighborhood," Kitty explained when Aunt Susanne looked at her with a whole face full of disapproval. "And I was brought up with boys. I played marbles and baseball instead of with dolls. And I could whistle if I couldn't sew. It really isn't necessary to dress dolls now. They come all clothed and with wardrobe trunks full of more clothes. Just look at Sis's dolls and if you find one that was dressed outside of a factory I'll turn over a new leaf. But I shan't have to do that. I know what I am talking about!"



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Aunt Susanne sighed. It was not as easy to be at the head of a modern family as she had thought it would be when she had read Uncle Albert's cry for help in her little home in Manitou. To be sure Sybil could sew and cook after a fashion. She could run up something to wear and make tea and concoct messes in a chafing dish, but she had absolutely no idea of pleasing any one but herself. Whether it was the evening paper, which Uncle Albert expected to read first, or Arthur Parkyn whom Kitty planned to entertain, what Sybil wanted she took. If Aunt Susanne objected Sybil would pat her shoulder and call her an old duck, and if Aunt Susanne continued to object Sybil would shrug her shoulders and flounce away with a black look and a muttered: "Well, it's my affair, isn't it? I guess I can do as I please!" No wonder Aunt Susanne shook her head and that she and Uncle Albert talked long and earnestly about their problems.

"Of course you can't understand us," Bert said when Aunt Susanne took one of her problems to him. As a man who had a family of his own Bert should appreciate her worries. They might be Sanscrit or Choctaw to Kitty or Sybil, but Bert should see that what Aunt Susanne was really trying to do was to understand her young people. "We don't belong to your generation. Each generation is different from the last, worse according to the older people, better in the opinion of the younger ones. It has to be different or there would be no progress. Leave the girls alone, Aunt Susanne. They are all right. I've no doubt your parents thought you were a rebel and you came out all right. Who was it said that children don't take after their parents but they take after their genera-

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? Each of us has to work out his own salvation," reminded her.

But I want to help!" Her old bones ached with sire to help.

You can't help any more than you can learn to spell write or bound the United States for George, than can eat for George," he laughed. "Each of us to get his own knowledge."

was very confusing and very disturbing and very satisfactory, but if she could not help Kitty and l from the storehouse of her own experience she d pet and comfort them. But they actually did seem to want petting and comforting. When any- g went wrong with Kitty she shut her door and ed by herself until her sky cleared. Sybil sulked dly until she was offered something she valued more what had been refused her.

[t's unbelievable!" Aunt Susanne confided to

[t comes from jumping into a made-to-order fam- he suggested with a twinkle in his eye. "You ld be used to our ways if you had had us from beginning."

You wouldn't have such ways if I had had you from beginning!" she boasted.

[ wouldn't be so sure of that."

ut if Uncle Albert's big marble mansion was as of problems as any arithmetic, it was also full of ry and luxury is the easiest thing in the world to pt and adopt. Bert might grumble about being thered in down cushions, but no one ever saw him w aside the smothering down.

Look at the old anarchist gloating over the spoils he predatory rich!" Vernon said one evening as

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Bert stood for a long time before an Inness which hung in the living room.

"Vernon! Bert is a socialist, not an anarchist!" Aunt Susanne never would have remained under the same roof with an anarchist. She knew she never would. She was scared to death of anarchists, but she could not be afraid of Bert.

"What is an anarchist but a socialist with a high temperature?" Vernon asked lightly. "By the end of the year, when he has served his sentence here, Bert won't be so sure that the wealth of the world should be distributed so that each of us will get five dollars and seventy-five cents."

"Five dollars and seventy-five cents?" repeated Aunt Susanne. What did Vernon mean?

"Approximately," explained Vernon.

"What would we do with it?" asked Aunt Susanne, still a bit bewildered.

"Make a new lot of capitalists so that the next generation could have a new crop of reformers. The old world is nothing but a treadmill, you know. We go round and round and round."

The trace of bitterness in his voice made Aunt Susanne put her hand on his arm. "You like your work, don't you, Vernon?"

"Like it! Aunt Susanne, how could any man like to be shut in a cage for eight hours a day? The only thing that makes it at all bearable is the big idea that came to me when I went into the office that first day. I'm going to write a symphony to typify the commercialism of the day. Listen," he ran up to the piano. "Click! clack! Doesn't that sound like a million typewriters? And this is exactly the way our chief

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looks when he comes down in the morning." He sounded a pompous chord.

"That is a great idea, Vern," chuckled Kitty. "But I scarcely think Uncle Albert will approve of it. He expects you to put your mind on business, not set business to music."

"I'm not responsible for Uncle Albert's stupid ideas. Listen! Isn't that it?"

It was, startlingly, it, and she had to say so. "I don't honestly see how you stay in an office all day," she added wonderingly.

"I'll tell you." He stopped playing to lean forward confidentially.

Aunt Susanne leaned forward, too. Vernon and Kitty seemed on excellent terms. Vernon always wanted to play his thoughts to Kitty before he gave them to any one else. She wondered if Uncle Albert had noticed that. And Vernon agreed with Kitty on the big, vital questions which Kitty seemed to think were so important. And now Vernon was going to confide in Kitty. Aunt Susanne wondered—— If Vernon and Kitty had been of her generation she would have known what confidences and flushed cheeks and sparkling eyes meant, but as Vernon and Kitty were plainly not of her generation she could only wonder. But it would please Uncle Albert if she were right.

"It's really on account of the twins," she heard Vernon confide to Kitty. "Bert is too visionary and idealistic ever to do much for them and they have a right to a chance. We have to stick together, you know. And then, too, my dear Kitty, I want a little money for myself. The rent of garrets has gone up. Genius wants steam heat and baths and cream on its

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cereal now. And then, too," he hesitated and played a few bars before he said a little consciously, "I shan't always want to live alone. I want a wife and a home of my own some day."

"You sound like Uncle Albert!" Kitty exclaimed scornfully, although Aunt Susanne was almost sure she flushed just the least little bit when Vernon told her that he wanted a wife some day.

"A home of my own!" repeated Vernon firmly. "I didn't mention a cage. I don't really mind the office so much since I had this idea." He played the typewriter motif again. "I'm killing two birds with one stone."

"I wish I could," murmured Kitty rebelliously, and there was no doubt that her cheeks were flushed. "You are a lucky dog, Vern!" And she drew a sigh from the tip of her slipper. "How awfully long a year is! Isn't there any way to speed up time? They say we have annihilated distance with wireless and automobiles and aëroplanes, can't we do something with time?"

"Well," Vernon got up from the piano and looked down at her as she sat on the top step which led from the living room up to the music room. "If you want to speed up you might take a lesson from Syb. There is nothing slow about our young second cousin. You should have seen her dancing at the Waloo this afternoon with Arthur Parkyn."

"With Arthur!" Kitty jumped up too and stared at Vernon. She could not believe that he really had seen Sybil dancing with Arthur Parkyn that afternoon. "Arthur told me he had to work on a case!"

"He told you the truth," chuckled Vernon. "Sybil is something of a case. And she certainly is crazy

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about your friend Arthur. Don't stay at home and sulk, Kitty. If you want to keep your friend you will have to get out and snatch. That's what all the girls are doing!"

Kitty's head was high, and her voice was very cold and distant—it seemed to come from Greenland, or perhaps the North Pole—when she answered: "If Arthur Parkyn wants to be snatched by Sybil, Sybil is perfectly welcome to him!" And she walked away with her head still in the air.

Vernon waited until she had crossed the threshold before he turned to Aunt Susanne.

"What do you think, Aunt Susanne? Do you think she really cares for Parkyn?"

Aunt Susanne shook her head hopelessly. "I don't know what to think," she confessed. "If you young people belonged to my generation I might be able to tell you, but you don't. You belong to your own and the two seem farther apart than Waloo and Shanghai. I don't know what to think, Vernon."

## X

UNCLE ALBERT was dictating a letter all about imports and exports and rates and per cents. It sounded as dry as half a dozen bones, and yet in the middle of the very dryest sentence Uncle Albert stopped dictating to laugh. His secretary looked at him in surprise and then hurriedly read through the notes on imports and exports to see if he, also, could find any merriment in them. But no note could give him, as a vagrant thought told Uncle Albert, that he had seen small Bud and Sis stamp their minute at their father that morning and shout to him: "We shan't!" They had done more than that, for Bud had kicked and Sis had bitten, and Bert plainly had been at his wits' end to know how to convince them that he could not let the water in their bathroom overflow the tubs and make a pond on which they could slide. Uncle Albert had been shocked at them, but now he laughed, for he realized that the twins were showing Bert just what Bert was showing him. Bert needed no demonstration, Uncle Albert thought, and he was glad the twins were giving him one, even if they had shown him. He discovered that he would like to do something for the twins. To be sure he had given them a beautiful nursery full of toys, and a nurse, who had a diploma from a hospital training school and won high references from a medical specialist, who would not prescribe for any one over twelve years of age, but he wanted to do something more personal. W

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could an old man do for a small great-grandniece and a great-grandnephew? Not an idea, not a suggestion did his tired old brain offer him. The quick mind which had been the wonder and the dismay of more than one group of financiers was as empty as your pocket on the last day of the month. As usual, when in doubt, Uncle Albert turned to his secretary.

"John," he demanded most unexpectedly, "do you know anything about children?"

John was surprised, for although Uncle Albert had talked to him many times of rates and per cents he never before had mentioned children. Fortunately that was a topic on which John Maclean could talk without looking up any statistics in the files.

"I have three of my own," he said cautiously, "so I know something. I shouldn't go so far as to say I know everything."

"If you wanted to give them a good time, what would you do?" asked Uncle Albert, as if he would have an answer to that question at once or know the reason why.

John Maclean smiled and wished that Uncle Albert would never ask him anything harder. "I'd take them to the circus!" And then he remembered that it was March and that March was not a circus month. "There isn't any circus now, so I'd take them to the Zoo."

"The Zoo? That means animals. Educational as well as entertaining. I shouldn't be surprised if you were right. Where is this Zoo, and when is it open?"

When Uncle Albert drove home full of pleasant plans for his family he met Sybil at the door. She wore her hat and coat and was evidently going out.

"Well, young woman!" exclaimed Uncle Albert



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with a noble attempt at playfulness. "And where do you think you are going?"

Sybil had been fussing with a refractory glove strap, and she did not know he was beside her until he spoke. She looked up quickly, and her face flushed.

"Uncle Albert! How you startled me! I supposed you were at your office. I'm going out." And she would have passed him and gone out if he had not put his hand on her arm. Something in her manner made him pursue the question further.

"What do you mean by out?"

She looked at him indignantly. "Do I have to tell you where I go every time I put my nose out of the door?" she demanded hotly. "Really, Uncle Albert, you expect too much!"

"Don't you want to tell me?" He was surprised and a little hurt. Surely a devoted young daughter such as Sybil had been to him would wish to tell an indulgent parent, such as he had been to Sybil, of her goings out as well as her comings in. It was very plain that this young daughter was not going to tell him a word, for she twisted herself free and said so.

"I shan't be questioned!" she declared vehemently. "I'm old enough to do as I please!" Suddenly the anger died out of her face, and she began to coax and wheedle, patting his arm with her gloved fingers. "If I should tell any one it would be you, dear Uncle Albert! I'm really not going anywhere in particular, but I shan't tell you a word because I don't think it is any of your business, dear as you are!" And she put up her rosy little face and kissed his cheek. Then she waved her hand and went gayly away, leaving Uncle Albert uncertain whether to be indignant or pleased.

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"Upon my word!" he muttered. "Upon my word! So the modern young miss won't account to any one. Upon my word!" And then he smiled as he remembered the cool touch of her red, red lips. "The little baggage!"

Go to the Zoo? Kitty laughed in Uncle Albert's face when he presented his invitation. But after all she might as well go. She had been drifting aimlessly around the house all morning, looking at Uncle Albert's treasures and wondering if there was any story connected with the old black picture which Uncle Albert had said was not worth looking at and listening to Aunt Susanne's eager questions of city life. Aunt Susanne wanted to see a Russian dancer and a Yogi and a Swami; she wanted to visit a baby clinic and see the babies weighed and hear the mothers told that spinach was a better baby food than sauerkraut; she wanted to ride in an *aéroplane* and eat chop suey; she wanted to spend twenty dollars for a pair of shoes and eighty dollars for a French hat; she wanted to see a tray of real French pastry and to attend a *séance* of spiritualists. Indeed she wanted to do everything that any one else had ever done. A visit to the Zoo would at least make a break in the list of Aunt Susanne's wants, and so when Aunt Susanne looked at her hopefully and said, "I wish you would come with us, my dear. It will be amusing to watch the children. And they do ask such questions. I am often puzzled to answer them. Come and help me," she said she would.

"Where did Sybil go?" asked Uncle Albert, when he had his party all arranged.

Aunt Susanne looked at him blankly. "I never asked her. Should I?"

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It was Kitty who answered, and she did it quickly and with decision. "No! Sybil is old enough to go where she pleases!"

"That is scarcely true, Kitty," ventured Uncle Albert. "Although I hope that Sybil would not choose to go where she shouldn't."

Kitty regarded him with surprise. "That was what I meant," she explained. "Sybil has decent ideas, and you should trust her. What difference does it make to you where she has gone?" She did not put the question to him impertinently but with a real desire for information. She honestly wanted to know why Uncle Albert thought he should have a diagram of the movements of any girl.

Uncle Albert actually hesitated to tell her that in his estimation a girl of Sybil's age should always confide her plans to her parent or her guardian. He knew his sisters had always told their mother where they were going. He stood in the place of Sybil's parents, and she should have been glad to tell him what she planned to do. He was sorry he had not ordered her to stay at home and join the Zoo party where he could have kept his eye on her, although at the bottom of his puzzled heart he knew that she would have declared indignantly: "I shan't!"

But if Kitty did not jump up and down at the invitation to visit the Zoo Bud and Sis did. They were so excited that they could not sit still but moved restlessly about in the big limousine, now stepping on Aunt Susanne's broad-toed shoes and now on Kitty's brown oxfords, which Uncle Albert considered perfectly ridiculous shoes for winter wear. Aunt Susanne only said "My dears!" when the children tramped on her feet, but Kitty pulled them to the seat with a firm

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hand and a stern command to sit still and behave themselves. It was Kitty, not the promenaders, Aunt Susanne rebuked.

"The little dears are so excited," she explained.

"That is no reason they should make jelly out of my feet and ruin a perfectly good pair of shoes," began Kitty, but Bud broke in with a breathless question.

"Could we make jelly out of your feet, Cousin Kitty? What kind of jelly would it be?" until Kitty hugged him and told him that he was a perfect dear as well as a perfect nuisance.

From his corner Uncle Albert watched them well pleased. Again he knew that he was right. There were instincts in Kitty which had only to be developed to make her a sweet, refined gentlewoman. Uncle Albert thought that he was an expert developer of womanly instincts and the children would help him.

Kitty loitered behind them as they went up the path to the monkey house, until Bud stopped to catch her hand and look up with an eager little face to ask if they would see the baby monkeys as well as the papa and mamma monkeys. Kitty laughed and squeezed his dimpled hand. He was a dear little fellow or would be a dear little fellow if he would stay off her feet. As if he read her thoughts Bud left her feet alone to trample on her mind, for he wanted to know at once where monkeys came from, if God made them, what did they eat, did they like peanuts better than ice cream or lemonade, did they always know how to climb trees or did they go to kindergarten to learn, how long did it take to learn, how old was the funny one in the corner, what were their names, did they mind living in a cage, did they have a bath every morning, wouldn't it

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be splendid to have your clothes fastened to you, did they ever wear out and where did they get new suits, which were the rich monkeys that were taking the bread from the mouths of the poor monkeys?

"God bless my soul!" chuckled Uncle Albert as he heard the first dozen questions, but he frowned disagreeably at the last one.

Kitty looked about in despair. A monkey was just a monkey to her. She had forgotten that questions could be asked about one. Uncle Albert met her bewildered eyes and stopped frowning to laugh.

"He has just commenced," he said encouragingly.

And he had. Kitty found how true were Uncle Albert's words as they went from animal house to animal house. Bud and Sis seemed to enter into a friendly contest as to which could ask the most questions. And in between they fed the monkeys, the elephants, and the bears. They cried out joyfully at the sight of the brilliant tropical birds.

"God makes beautiful things, doesn't He?" Sis stared at an especially brilliant bird. "Why didn't He give little girls such pretty clothes instead of making them wear rompers from a store!" She was discontented with her own sober raiment. "We have new clothes but they aren't like the parrot's. We even have new nighties!" She took a skipping step as she remembered that the brightly feathered parrots had no nighties.

"Splendid!" admired Kitty.

"Have you?" Sis asked Aunt Susanne and Kitty and Uncle Albert in turn. "Not even new nighties?" She was sorry for them. "We have, haven't we, Bud?"

"Clothes are all girls think about, no matter what their age is," chuckled Uncle Albert.

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"Not all girls," contradicted Kitty. "Sis will think of a lot besides clothes when she grows up."

"Will I?" Sis was interested. "What will I think of when I'm a beautiful lady?"

"Other people," Kitty told her mysteriously.

"Will they be as nice as clothes?" Sis was doubtful. "My new dress has pockets with ruffles." She was not at all sure that it would be as pleasant to think of people as of ruffled pockets.

"Far, far nicer!" promised Kitty.

It was the mysterious look in her eyes and the mysterious note in her voice which convinced Sis and made her promise solemnly: "Then I will. You hear, Bud? I'm going to think of people when I'm a beautiful lady!"

"Men can do that as well as ladies." Bud was rather scornful. "Look at daddy and all the people he thinks of. Men can think of more things than ladies all the time. Can't they, Uncle Albert?" He asked the other man of the party to indorse his statement.

"Well," Uncle Albert was wary. "When you are a man, you know, Buddie, you will have to think of the ladies, to be brave and chivalrous."

"Will I?" Bud questioned dubiously. "And what will the ladies have to think about me?" he demanded.

"To be fair and honest with you, that is far more important than chivalry." Kitty looked at Uncle Albert, who stood still and stared at her and muttered:

"God bless my soul!" again.

A triumphant gleam flashed in Kitty's eyes, for she had made a great discovery. Why, here at her hand

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was clay to be molded. She could make of little Bud and Sis what she pleased. She almost wished that Uncle Albert had made his contract for twenty years instead of one so that she could be quite sure that Bud and Sis would have the right ideals. How strange it was that she had not seen the opportunity before. She remembered the Jesuit demand for a child for the first seven years of his life that there need be no worry over the last sixty-three years of his life, and smiled happily. Bud and Sis were not yet six. She could make anything of them—just anything!

It was as the perfect man and woman, which she had made of them, that she allowed Bud and Sis to make jelly of her feet unrebuked as they drove home while Bud resumed the rôle of question box. Why didn't rhinoceroses' clothes fit as well as snakes', did snakes ever get tired crawling on their stomachs, where did Kitty think God kept His red and yellow feathers, and how did He know which to put on parrots and which on sparrows, why was an elephant's nose called a trunk instead of a suitcase, and if a baby lion had mush and milk and spinach for lunch instead of blood and bones would it growl and roar or would it say "baa" like a lamb?

"God bless my soul!" exclaimed Uncle Albert at last. "Your tongue is hung in the middle to wag at both ends, Bud!"

Bud stuck out his pink tongue and investigated it. "How is it hung in the middle, Uncle Albert? And where is the other end? This is this end, but where is the other end?" he demanded, until Uncle Albert wished that he had left well enough alone.

They had to wait in the driveway until a roadster which stood in front of the door had driven away, and

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when the limousine stopped there was Sybil smiling at them and waving her hand toward the roadster.

"Who was that?" asked Uncle Albert, as he stiffly stepped from his car. "Who was that, Sybil?"

"One of my friends," beamed Sybil. "Have you had a pleasant afternoon? Where have you been?"

"Didn't you hear me?" asked Uncle Albert impatiently. "I asked who was that?"

"Oh, help!" murmured Sybil mutinously, and she looked oddly at Kitty.

Kitty was looking oddly at her. "Why make a mystery of it, Syb?" she inquired so carelessly that Sybil flushed.

"That was Arthur Parkyn's car, Uncle Albert," she said quickly and a trifle defiantly. "Arthur Parkyn was driving it."

"I thought young Parkyn was Kitty's friend?" Uncle Albert sounded like Bud, he was so interrogative.

"He is my friend, too," smiled Sybil. "Can't a young man be a friend to more than one girl? But you haven't told me where you have been, Uncle Albert? Don't you want to tell me?" She laughed in his face as she asked him the question he had asked her earlier in the afternoon. "I should think you would want to tell me where you have been."



## XI

SYBIL had her party, and she was in a pretty flutter of excitement over it. She hung about Uncle Albert and wheedled and flattered him until Uncle Albert, who had forgotten long ago how prettily girls can wheedle and flatter, agreed to all she asked. Sybil knew exactly what she wanted, and how she wanted it, and she gave her orders as if she had always possessed a staff of trained servants to carry them out for her. She explained in the most charming way in the world that this was her party and that the guests were to be her friends.

"Uncle Albert will give you a dance of your own whenever you want one," she told Kitty. "And then you can invite all of your own friends."

Kitty laughed, and amusement and scorn were about equally divided in her laughter. She regarded Sybil as a primer in which the words were in large black type. She had no trouble at all to read Sybil. "There is only one person I should care to have at your party," she said after she had had her scornful amused laugh.

"I hope it is a man!" Sybil donned the air of a martyr about to be sacrificed for the family altar.

"I should like Arthur Parkyn——"

She was not allowed to tell what she would like of Arthur Parkyn, for Sybil interrupted her with a little shriek.

"Arthur Parkyn! His name is at the very top of my list! He was the first person I thought of! I told you I was crazy about him!" she explained frankly.

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"I liked him the minute I saw him at that mush and milk party, but I didn't see him again until he came here that night. I like him better than any man I ever met! He hasn't a lot of wild fads he expects you to be interested in, and he is such a duck about listening when you want to talk and helping you to have a good time. Why, Arthur Parkyn is the very first person I invited to my party!"

"Oh, is he?" Kitty felt like a pan-cake, very, very flat, and she stared at her cousin with an odd flash in her eyes.

"He is!" Sybil answered promptly. "And if you really want to help me, Kitty, you will ask Aunt Susanne kindly not to interfere. She doesn't understand what I want at all."

Aunt Susanne had so little understanding of Sybil's plans that she carried them to Uncle Albert to be looked over. "Have you heard of Sybil's plans?" she asked anxiously. "Do you approve of them, Albert?"

"She talked them over with me." Uncle Albert disliked to tell Aunt Susanne that he had scarcely heard Sybil's plans for Sybil had consulted him in a moment when he was half asleep and the plans had gone in one ear and slipped out of the other ear. "I hope you aren't going to show partiality, Sue," he went on with great dignity. "You seem to think that everything that Kitty does is all right, and that everything that Sybil does is all wrong. That isn't fair!"

"Why, Albert Galusha!" Aunt Susanne was indignant at his hope. "I try to be fair to both of them, but it does seem as if a dancing party should begin before midnight and end before breakfast."

"Midnight! Breakfast? What do you mean?" Uncle Albert climbed awkwardly down from his high

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horse, and when Aunt Susanne had explained that Sybil's guests had not been asked to come until ten o'clock and Sybil had ordered a breakfast of scrambled eggs and little sausages as well as a supper of salad and croquettes and ice cream Uncle Albert would not believe her. He could not believe her. "Nonsense!" he stuttered, and he was absolutely sure that Aunt Susanne was not fair to Sybil. "I'll ask Sybil."

Sybil only opened her blue eyes in surprise at Uncle Albert's surprise. Of course her friends would not come before ten. How could they? And she did hope Uncle Albert would not send them home without any breakfast. Dancing did make you so hungry. Of course, if he did object, only she couldn't see why on earth he should, they could all tumble into cars and drive down to one of the all-night places for sausages and hot cakes. They had done that after the last dance Sybil had gone to, and it was the greatest fun. One of the men had eaten nineteen hot cakes. They had counted them.

Uncle Albert's eyes popped wide open. So did his mouth. "Nineteen hot cakes, Sybil? That's ridiculous! No one but George could eat nineteen hot cakes at once. Your party can begin as early as you please, but I want it over by midnight!"

Sybil shrieked. "Midnight! Why, it won't really begin by midnight! Why, Uncle Albert, you just let me manage this party the proper way, and see if you don't like it. You know you want it right! You're such a dear!" And she hugged the dear and ruffled the white fringe on each side of his bald head until Uncle Albert admitted that he hadn't been to a dance for forty years. But he added in muttered disgust that

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he would be hanged if he could approve of such nonsense. He never had had breakfast at any party he had gone to when he was a young man.

Sybil was not at all surprised to hear that he had gone home breakfastless from his youthful gayeties. "I don't suppose you had," she murmured sympathetically, with another pat on his bald head. "It must be years and years and years since you were young and went to dances. And the world has moved, dear Uncle Albert. Don't you want to keep up with it?"

Bewildered Uncle Albert was not sure that he did, and he was quite sure that he did not when Sybil came down in her dancing frock the night of her party. He had been yawning in a corner for his bedtime arrived before the first guest. Sybil stood in the doorway and curtsied demurely, but she did not look demure. She wore a very smart frock of daffodil satin, very low in the neck and very short in the skirt. Her yellow hair was drawn back from her heart-shaped face to billow out over her ears and be caught at the nape of her neck so that her head had a distorted appearance. To Uncle Albert's amazed eyes she was all bare neck and arms and slim yellow legs.

"God bless my soul!" He rubbed his eyes and sat up and looked at her suspiciously. He was almost sure that the color in her cheeks was artificial, and there were dark shadows under her eyes which made her eyes look larger and more mysterious, but surely the child didn't paint! But did she? Uncle Albert asked her. He did it somewhat timidly, for if she did not paint she would be insulted by his question, but he just had to know.

Sybil was not at all insulted. Indeed, she looked quite pleased and danced over to a mirror to look at

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herself. "Sure, it's rouge!" she told him proudly. "I can't trust Nature to-night. When you get your rosy cheeks out of a box you know you have them. Don't I do it well? It's only rouge!" She spoke of rouge as if it were nothing but soap and water.

Uncle Albert just looked at her, too stunned to tell her that in his opinion she would look better if she would wash her face and put on some clothes. Before he could overcome his surprise and express his opinion, Kitty came in. Her frock was pink and it also was low and short although not quite so low nor so short as Sybil's. Her coiffure did not distort her head into a bushel basket, and her face was not painted. Her color changed too often. Uncle Albert was glad to see it come and go. Aunt Susanne followed Kitty. Her gown was of black lace over cloth of silver. It was the first real evening gown Aunt Susanne had had for thirty years, and it made Uncle Albert snort and mutter "God bless my soul!" again.

He asked God to bless his soul many times as Sybil's guests drifted carelessly in until the gallery was filled with white shoulders above gleaming satin and with little painted faces.

"Thank heaven the men still wear clothes!" he said to himself, as he hunted up Aunt Susanne and told her what he thought.

"It isn't decent, Sue! It isn't decent to see children dressed like that! What are their mothers thinking of? Why didn't you tell Sybil and Kitty I wanted them covered?"

Aunt Susanne sighed. Between Sybil, who was stimulatingly new-fashioned, and Uncle Albert, who was stultifyingly old-fashioned, her way was difficult. "I did try, Albert, but you know how useless it is to

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talk to Sybil! She just says that all the girls do it and she can't have it right she doesn't want it at all."

"But she needn't paint her face," he whispered, shamed to speak of what Sybil did to her face.

"No, she needn't, but she does!" Aunt Susanne laughed softly, unexpectedly. "In my day we didn't use rouge, Albert. When I was Sybil's age we dampened the red petals of an artificial rose and rubbed the color over our cheeks until our fathers told us to stop it."

"And did you?" Girls in Aunt Susanne's day must have been very different from the girls of Sybil's day if they stopped doing anything because their fathers told them to stop.

"Of course we didn't. We just rubbed it on more carefully. My father never liked my new clothes. He used to say that my bustle was vulgar and indecent!" And she laughed again as she remembered the bustle of her girlish days.

Uncle Albert eyed Aunt Susanne. What kind of a chaperon was she, he wondered. If he had charge of a young girl the young girl would do as he said, or he would know the reason why, he told himself. But he was careful not to tell any one else. He stopped Vernon who was sauntering by. Bert had refused to attend Sybil's party, and George had thoughtfully explained that he would have his supper in the kitchen and not bother Sybil.

"What do you think of all this, Vernon?" Uncle Albert inquired cautiously.

"It's a corking place for a dance. And the music is all right, Uncle Albert!" As if Uncle Albert had been worrying over the music or the gallery.

"I mean the girls, their clothes and the paint, you

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know?" Uncle Albert blushed to speak of the clothes and the paint, but he had to know what Vernon thought of them.

"Oh, that!" Vernon looked around with a careless smile. "Seems to be the style." He spoke carelessly, too. Evidently Vernon did not think anything of the clothes or the paint. "There's a queen, Uncle Albert, over in the corner in the purple satin."

"Out of the purple satin, I should say," Uncle Albert told him grimly, and when Vernon went toward the "queen" Uncle Albert turned to Aunt Susanne. "The boy thought it was all right," he said in surprise.

Aunt Susanne was not at all amazed, and she said so. "Of course he did. He's used to it. And the music is wonderful, Albert! I declare I could dance to it myself."

"If you call it dancing," grumbled Uncle Albert, watching the young people as they shuffled up and down the gallery. "When we went to parties, Sue, we had a program of waltzes and polkas and schottisches, until we had danced four of each, and then we went home."

"Or to Gamble's restaurant for an oyster stew," Aunt Susanne reminded him, but he did not listen to her.

"And the men signed for the dances they wanted, but here—if a man wants to dance with a girl he just goes up and takes her from her partner! Sybil has danced with five men since this—this jig started!" Uncle Albert was puzzled over the cutting-in. "That isn't the way we did, Sue!"

"This is better, much better if you have a bad partner!" It was plain that Aunt Susanne was too interested to be shocked at the difference between dances now and dances forty years ago.

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Kitty, one-stepping by with Vernon, stopped. Her cheeks were as pink as her frock, but Uncle Albert did not object to her pretty color. He knew that Nature painted Kitty's cheeks.

"Well, Uncle Albert and Aunt Susanne, how do you like Sybil's party?" asked Kitty merrily.

"I believe I could learn to dance that." Aunt Susanne moved away so that she could watch the winkling satin and patent leather feet.

"Of course you could! Uncle Albert could, too. Come out in the hall, and Vern will teach you, and I'll teach Uncle Albert. Come on!" She held out a slim, white hand.

"Not to-night!" Aunt Susanne drew back, but not quite so far as Uncle Albert had fearfully retreated. "Some other time maybe I'll let you show me. I believe I could learn. So could you, Albert. You used to be a fine dancer. I like to know how to do what other folks do. There's Sybil dancing with your friend again, Kitty." And she pointed to Sybil, who was clinging to Arthur in a way which Uncle Albert declared was sickening, positively sickening.

"If I had my way I'd send them all home until they learn how to behave!" he snorted.

"Syb does rather overdo it," Kitty agreed, and a tiny frown appeared between her eyes as she saw Arthur bend over Sybil's yellow head. "But she dances beautifully!"

"It isn't much like our day when we had to have at least a foot of space between partners," muttered Uncle Albert.

"An inch is considered conservative now," Kitty told him absently.

"An inch! An inch!" Uncle Albert was disgusted,



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and he did not care who knew it. "For half a cent I'd send them all home!"

"If you did they would go somewhere else and dance," prophesied Vernon. "It's all right, Uncle Albert. Perfectly all right."

"Who's that girl over there in green with green earrings and a green thingumbob in her hair?" asked Uncle Albert abruptly. "She makes me bilious!"

Kitty followed the direction of his rudely pointing finger, and her eyes and lips crinkled, but she kept her face sober. "That's Muriel Abercrombie," she said.

"Muriel Abercrombie!" He would not believe it. Why, that girl in green did not look a bit as if she were the daughter of the National Bank and the Colonial Dames! She looked—— Uncle Albert wanted to shut his eyes and bellow. If this party of Sybil's had been anywhere but under his own roof he would never have considered it respectable, and even if it was under his own roof, in his very own gallery, he was ashamed to say what he thought it was.

He had known that Sybil's friends were artists and poets and musicians, irresponsible young people of whom anything might be expected, but with them tonight were the sons and daughters of a few of his own friends, a heaping tablespoonful of respectability, as it were, among the two or three cupfuls of irresponsible Bohemians, and actually he could not tell which was which. Why, Muriel Abercrombie and Corice Macnamara looked like any one but the daughter of staid John Abercrombie and the granddaughter of old Andy Macnamara! If they were his daughters he would—— And then he caught sight of Sybil again and groaned. He was not so sure what he would do if he were so unfortunate as to have a daughter.

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He tried to find a sign of what he considered modesty and refinement in these young people, but he could not do it. Not only did the girls dress outrageously and allow a man to hold them outrageously while they danced, but the things they said! He wanted to cover his ears. And the things they did! Why, with his own two old eyes, aided by his strong glasses, he saw Sybil stand on tiptoe and kiss Arthur Parkyn in the sun room. Kiss him actually on the cheek! Uncle Albert's two old eyes almost fell out on his wrinkled old cheeks, and he ran away as fast as he could.

"Who is this friend of yours?" he demanded of Kitty, stopping her as she was dancing with young Andy Macnamara and drawing her away so that the whole world might not hear of his disgrace. "Who is this Parkyn fellow you brought to the house?"

"Why he's—he's——" Kitty was puzzled to explain Arthur so that Uncle Albert would understand him, and she was more than puzzled at Uncle Albert's curiosity, which seemed to be at fever point, ninety-nine degrees if it was anything.

"I don't like him! I don't want him around!" Uncle Albert exclaimed dictatorially without waiting for any explanation.

"Uncle Albert!" Kitty stiffened. "I shall choose my own friends!"

"I'm not going to have him or any other man kissing Sybil all over the house!" went on Uncle Albert as if the limit of his patience had been reached. "I won't have it!"

"Kissing Sybil!" Kitty stared at him, and the color deepened in her cheeks.

Uncle Albert flushed, too, when he realized that his indignation and disgust had made a telltale out of him,

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and he stammered: "Or Sybil kissing him or any one else. I tell you, Kitty, I won't have it!"

"You had better talk to Sybil then. I haven't been kissing any one!" And she walked away leaving him to stammer and sputter that he had never said she had, but he wanted her to understand.

"Your old uncle looks like a fish out of water," laughed young Andy Macnamara, as he replaced his arm around Kitty's waist.

"He acts worse. A lot worse!" exclaimed Kitty as she swung into step. Her eyes roamed around the gallery in search of Arthur. It couldn't be true, what Uncle Albert said, and yet why should Uncle Albert make up such a story? Even if she and Arthur might be considered only partially engaged she didn't like to hear he was kissing another girl—kissing Sybil. She frowned as she danced away with Andy and looked for Arthur.

Her roaming eye was attracted by a man who seemed more interested in the pictures than the dancers. He was tall and thin and was very dark as to hair and skin. He was bending over the old picture about which Uncle Albert was so mysterious as if he would pierce the blackness and see what was beneath.

"Who is that man?" Kitty asked Andy Macnamara. "The one who looks as if he would eat that old picture?"

"Search me. Looks like a dago. I never saw him before, but there is quite a macaroni cast to his countenance."

"Dago? You mean an Italian? I wonder!" Kitty slipped out of Andy Macnamara's arms as Stanley Cabot would have cut in and with a murmured excuse to Stanley made her way around the gallery.

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The thought of an Italian had made her stop dancing and join the tall dark man who was staring so curiously at Uncle Albert's "worthless" picture, for she remembered what Bert had said about the Italian government. If an Italian agent was looking for pictures in Uncle Albert's gallery Uncle Albert should know of it.

"Are you interested in the pictures?" she asked pleasantly, as a daughter of the house should speak to a guest.

"I am interested in this picture." He looked around and showed a large row of white teeth in a smile of admiration as he saw pink-cheeked Kitty in her pink dancing frock. He spoke with an accent which Kitty's work in Little Europe enabled her to identify at once. Naples, she told herself as soon as she heard him. "He's a Neapolitan!" "This is such a strange canvas," he went on, more Neapolitan with every word. "What is it?" He bent over the picture again, his nose not an inch from the blackened canvas.

"I'll ask my uncle to tell you. Just a minute!" And Kitty darted away. Surely Uncle Albert was the one to answer questions about that particular picture, especially when the questions were asked in an Italian accent.

But she could not find Uncle Albert for he had run away and shut himself in the little room with his Indian collection where he would not be shocked and disgusted. Neither could she find Sybil, who of course knew all about her guests and could tell her if the tall dark man was an agent for the Italian government. The only member of the family she could find was Vernon, but when they went back to the gallery the Neapolitan accent was not there. He was not in the gallery nor in the supper room nor anywhere else.

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"You dreamed him!" grinned Vernon. "You dreamed him, Kitty!"

"I did not!" Kitty was very emphatic. "You ask Mr. Macnamara. He said the man had a macaroni face."

"Kitty! Oh, Kitty!" And there was Arthur Parkyn with a hunted look on his face, and he caught her arm as if she were a refuge. "Oh, Kitty! I've been looking for you all evening!" he gasped, and he stepped behind her so that he was partially hidden by her pink frock. Arthur had been amused at the pleasure with which Sybil had greeted him and he had been flattered by the eagerness to dance with him that she had shown and then, if the truth were told, he had been almost as startled as Uncle Albert by the frank affection she had expressed for him. As soon as he could he had fled to Kitty. "Come on out of the crowd, Kitty," he begged. "I want to tell you something!"

Kitty forgot all about Neapolitans and governments and pictures as she remembered what Uncle Albert had said. She tossed her head high and looked at Arthur coolly.

"Tell me here. I like the crowd," she said per-versely.

But he put his hand more firmly on her arm and led her away. Uncle Albert, coming away from his Indians in the hope that the party was over, saw them and groaned. Even Kitty, the politician!

"You know, Kitty," Arthur was saying breathlessly. "I've changed my mind about you progressive girls. I'm not as keen on the purely feminine type as I was!" He drew a long breath. "I'm beginning to share your views!" And he smiled uncertainly and waited for

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er to tell him how glad she was that he had been converted.

But Kitty only laughed oddly and frowned. She thought that Arthur, like Sybil, was a primer with big black type easy to read. "That's a pity," she said jolly, "for Aunt Susanne has made me appreciate the feminine type. She's wonderful—a real diplomat! Talk about tact! I just have to admire her. So you see, Arthur dear, we're as far apart as ever!" She laughed impishly. "Only we have changed sides. It looks as if we never would see things the same, doesn't it?"

"Is Arthur Parkyn here?" called Sybil's clear voice from the doorway. "Oh, there you are, Arthur! Come, I want you!"

"I can't!" Arthur spoke as crossly as an impressionable man could speak to a girl who looked as rodisshly charming as Sybil did. "I'm talking to Kitty!"

"Oh, Arthur, please! Pretty please!" coaxed Sybil.

"I hate a girl who runs after a fellow," Arthur muttered rudely, although he was careful to mutter in voice so low that it could not reach Sybil's ears.

Kitty laughed. "Then you aren't as progressive as you said you were, Arthur dear, or you would believe that a girl has the same right to go after a man that a man has to go after a girl." And she walked away and left him to Sybil.

## XII

UNCLE ALBERT was not at all pleased with Sybil's party, and he did not hesitate to tell Aunt Susanne that he was not pleased.

"I should have known better than to permit Sybil to ask a crowd of Bohemians here," he complained fretfully, and he forgot completely those tablespoonfuls of sons and daughters of his own friends which should have leavened the Bohemian cupfuls. "And now that I have seen them I am more convinced than ever that I don't want my young people to have anything to do with men and girls who hold such outrageous ideas. Why, Sue, you would never believe the things they talked about! There was one couple in the sun parlor who were so excited they fairly shouted about trial marriages and birth control, and another couple in the library, right under my own picture, didn't want any weddings at all. Foolish conventionality and rotten shackles were some of the things they called weddings! And girls as well as men smoking cigarettes all over the house! Hoskins will have a pretty time cleaning up after them."

"Don't you worry about them, Albert," advised Aunt Susanne soothingly. "Girls will always want wedding gowns and wedding presents, even if they do talk about doing away with weddings. Don't you bother your head about that another minute."

"I have to bother about them, Sue," muttered Uncle Albert querulously. He absolutely refused to be soothed by Aunt Susanne's sympathy or knowledge of

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girls. "I'm under an obligation to train these young Galushas so that they will be a help to the world and not a menace. Nobody else in the family seems to feel it, but I know that we of the older generation are rank failures if we raise nothing but a lot of wild young rebels."

"Who is to decide whether the young people are rebels?" questioned Aunt Susanne, but she could question no farther, for Uncle Albert interrupted her with a glare and a snort and a grunt that he was to be the judge. Wasn't he the young Galushas' great-uncle?

No wonder Uncle Albert felt fractious. He had never gone to bed until after four o'clock when he was ashamed to look Hoskins in the face. What must Hoskins think of a dance which did not end until four o'clock? There had never been such goings-on in his house before. He would not be surprised if all the servants left, and then what would Kitty and Sybil and Sue do? He was almost sorry that Hoskins and the rest did not leave so that Kitty and Sybil and Sue, who had disappointed him so sadly, could show him how useless in a home they were with their wild ideas. He never knew that Hoskins and the rest had quite enjoyed Sybil's party even if it did keep them up until all hours.

"It's good to see life in the house," Hoskins had actually whispered to Mrs. Merrill, who wore her best black taffeta as she supervised Sybil's breakfast, for Sybil had her scrambled eggs and sausages as Sybil had everything she really wanted. Looking back Uncle Albert could not understand how he ever had permitted such an outrageous thing. Scrambled eggs and sausages at three o'clock in the morning! Oh, Godfrey! how tired he was! And he had an important



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directors' meeting. He hoped he would be able to keep awake.

He almost broke up the directors' meeting by asking Mr. Abercrombie with careful carelessness how he handled his young daughter, although he knew very well that Mr. Abercrombie did not handle her at all. Any one who looked at Muriel Abercrombie could see at once who did the handling in the Abercrombie family. But Mr. Abercrombie had ideas in regard to the younger generation and they matched Uncle Albert's ideas perfectly. Other directors with sons and daughters joined in the discussion, and it was unanimously agreed that the world would indeed be in a sad way when it was made over to such wild irresponsible young people. The chairman had to knock on the long mahogany table half a dozen times before he could get the attention of the directors to the important new business, and in the very middle of the discussion about dividends Uncle Albert went to sleep and had to be wakened by Mr. Abercrombie when the vote was taken.

"Eh! What's that?" he mumbled lifting his heavy eyelids with an effort. He nearly died of mortification when he realized what he had done. Never in all of his life had he gone to sleep in a directors' meeting before.

Uncle Albert found it very difficult to get his usual night's rest and look after his young people as they should be looked after. And he went to sleep in many places, in church where he decorously accompanied Aunt Susanne, in the theater where he yawningly took Sybil and Kitty, and even at the club where he withdrew to a secluded corner and snored peacefully for an hour before he went home to begin another

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round of pleasure. Uncle Albert's idea of what constituted home life, cozy comfort around the fireside and pleasant companionship, had not been adopted by his family, and before he realized it he was meekly going where he was told to go or left at home to wait nervously until his young people came chatteringly back. There were many times when Uncle Albert wondered if the salvation of the world and the salvage of these young Galushas were worth what he had to endure. He looked back on the quiet, monotonous days when he had only his books and his pictures for company with longing regret. Books could be put on the shelf and pictures hung on the wall, but these young people—Uncle Albert groaned helplessly. How painfully long a year could be. Uncle Albert often wondered if he would live to see the end of this year.

Why, only that morning Kitty had looked across the table at Vernon and said quite casually, as if she were asking for the loan of a book or a victrola record:

"I wish you had a pair of riding breeches, Vern! I'd borrow them and go for a ride this morning. It's such a perfect day!" And she glanced out of the breakfast-room window all commendation of the perfect day which April was offering them.

"Kitty!" Uncle Albert sputtered toast all over himself. He all but had a stroke, and he grew purple and incoherent.

"What's the matter now, Uncle Albert?" demanded Kitty somewhat impatiently. "I didn't ask for your breeches!"

"My dear!" Aunt Susanne looked astonished if she did not look shocked.

Vernon laughed joyously. "If I had a pair you

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should have them, Kit!" he exclaimed heartily. "But why don't you get some of your own?"

"I've ordered them, but the tailor can't get them out before the last of the week, and I want to ride to-day. I wish you did have a pair, Uncle Albert; I'd borrow them without saying a word to you."

Uncle Albert gasped for breath. "Kitty!" he managed to stammer. "Kitty! How can you? A man's breeches! It's—it's unthinkable!"

"But all the girls wear them," explained Kitty, and she exchanged her impatient frown for a twinkle in her eye. "Muriel Abercrombie," the twinkle was almost hidden from him as she soberly reminded him that Muriel Abercrombie was the pattern he had given her, "and everybody. Muriel told me only yesterday that she had borrowed her brothers' breeches more than once. She even plays golf in them!"

Uncle Albert looked at Aunt Susanne in speechless disgust. Wild as these young rebels of his had shown him that they could be, would any sane person believe that one of them, a girl, a college-bred girl if not a refined and cultured girl according to his standards, would go about boasting of borrowing a man's unmentionables and actually wearing them on horseback or the golf links? Aunt Susanne shook her head and then, as usual, she tried to find a few drops of oil to pour on the troubled waters.

"You make me think, Kitty, of the time your grandmother borrowed a suit of your Uncle Albert's and went to call on a young lady your Uncle Albert was showing attention to. Mollie Carter, you remember, Albert?" But Uncle Albert refused to remember and mumbled in disgust that it was not the same, not at all the same, and that it had been outrageous of Kitty's

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grandmother to borrow his clothes, and go and call on his young lady, perfectly outrageous.

"I don't understand you, Sue," he moaned when he and Aunt Susanne were alone. "Whenever one of them does anything outrageous you seem determined to find something that we did when we were young which was outrageous, too. But it isn't the same. Not at all the same! You heard Kitty? You heard her! It is more than I can understand! Borrowing men's breeches and smoking cigarettes and swearing and playing cards for money!"

"Kitty doesn't smoke and swear!" declared Aunt Susanne indignantly.

"If she doesn't her friends do. And she plays cards for money. She told me herself she won seven dollars and fifty cents at bridge yesterday afternoon."

"When she was playing at the Abercrombies?"

Uncle Albert moved uneasily. He was beginning to dislike the name of Abercrombie. "Yes, I believe it was at the Abercrombies. I can't understand how Mrs. Abercrombie permitted those young girls to play for money. I don't approve of gambling for young girls. It is bad enough for old men. And when I dared—dared, Sue!—in my own house, to speak to Kitty, she just laughed and asked me if I had forgotten the old days when I played euchre for cut-glass dishes and ash receivers. She asked me what the difference was."

"It sounds as if there wasn't any," murmured Aunt Susanne after a frowning moment in which she must have been trying to find the difference.

"Sounds!" Uncle Albert fairly jumped from his chair. "Sounds! You know it wasn't the same, Sue! It never was the same! And tearing around the country at all hours of the day and night in high-powered

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cars as they do. I don't approve of it! I'm about ready to think, Sue, that the automobile is the curse of the country. Driving forty miles to a dance and back again! No wonder they have to go to some disreputable place for breakfast!"

"The only reason we didn't drive forty miles," murmured Aunt Susanne, who seemed determined not to see the situation as it really was, black and dangerous and disgusting, "was because our old Dobbin wouldn't take us. You can't have forgotten, Albert, that we used to drive to Mifflin to parties? And that was twelve miles!"

Uncle Albert refused to remember. "That was not the same! Not at all the same!" he insisted, and he looked at Aunt Susanne with curious dismay. "I guess it's true that there is no fool like an old fool," he added fretfully, and Aunt Susanne could make her own application of the words. "Marriage hasn't improved you, Sue," he went on even more bluntly so that she would not miss his meaning entirely. "I don't see why under heaven you ever wanted to get married at your age! You should have known better!"

Aunt Susanne looked uncomfortably conscious as she always did when any one spoke of her marriage. "I guess I wanted a change," she murmured with surprising meekness.

He glared at her. "I guess you got it!" he muttered. "For you certainly are changed. If you were Kitty's age I believe in my heart you would be worse than she is!"

There was no doubt that Aunt Susanne had surprised and, yes, disappointed him. Whether it was due to her marriage about which she was so confoundedly mysterious, he did not know, but she certainly

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not seem to feel as he did. She was far more pathetic with the young people than she was with

He could not understand it. He remembered when it was everlastingly too late that when she a girl she had been thought rather daring if not ally wild. Why, she had driven the twelve miles a Mifflin in a buggy alone with a young man, don Guernsey, he remembered, at midnight. The r young people had gone in a crowd on a bus or decorous surrey which held two couples. No one Sue had driven alone with a young man. He had otten all about that until now. Why, it was over y years ago. He had thought that Sue Ellsworth ld be exactly the right woman to help bring his ug people to a realization of their wildness, but as not so sure. Marriage had changed Sue. Her and must have been— He wondered what kind of in he had been. She never spoke of him, and when one mentioned him she turned as red as a tomato stammered foolishly. That was strange. The ows he knew liked to talk about their husbands, but never wanted to talk of her husband. Ellsworth : have been a bad egg. Uncle Albert wanted to v more about him, something definite. He would the next Manitou man he saw. He could not ask

Sue did not invite questions about her marriage.

ut as Aunt Susanne gave him so little help and pathy he turned to old Mrs. Peter Simmons, who had considerable experience with young people. apas she could tell him what to do. He was just it at his wits' end.

ld Mrs. Peter Simmons laughed when she heard it Sybil's party and the young couple who talked

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of trial marriages in the sun room and of the other young couple in the library who wanted to do away with marriage altogether.

"My dear Mr. Galusha, why didn't you invite me?" she asked as she wiped the tears from her eyes. "I should have enjoyed it!"

"Enjoyed it!" Uncle Albert did not see how any one, least of all a woman who had celebrated her golden wedding, could have enjoyed such an exhibition of—of—youthful irresponsibility was the mildest term Uncle Albert could find for it.

"But if you didn't like your Sybil's party," went on Mrs. Peter Simmons, thoroughly enjoying her chat with Uncle Albert, "why don't you give a dance to show her the kind of a party you do like?"

Uncle Albert looked at her with quick approval. "Now that is an idea!" he exclaimed.

"I believe it is," choked old Mrs. Simmons.

"You can give me a list of young people——"

"Muriel Abercrombie," began Mrs. Simmons at once. "And——"

Uncle Albert eyed her with suspicion. "Yes, Muriel Abercrombie and her set, I suppose," he interrupted meekly. "I'll invite them for—I suppose eight would be a little early, but they shall come at nine. Nine to twelve," he decided. "I hope they will wear more clothes than Sybil's friends did. And we'll stop with a supper, no breakfast. Just a nice little program of waltzes and polkas and end with 'Home, Sweet Home' as we used to do."

"Polkas!" Old Mrs. Simmons spoke as if she had forgotten there was such a word in the big dictionary. "Don't you one-step, Mr. Galusha?"

"I haven't any time for nonsense," he said in gruff

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surprise that she should ask him such a ridiculous question.

"It isn't nonsense. It's exercise. I wish you could see old Peter Simmons and me dance after dinner. Peter complains that I spend as much for dance records as he does for cigars, and I guess I do. I'm an old woman, Albert Galusha, and I've learned something. Goodness knows seventy years should teach a woman a few things! And I've learned that you can never get very far opposing your young people, but sometimes you can go quite a distance by traveling with them and guiding them. You know," Mrs. Simmons went on very confidentially, "every generation has its slogan. Obligation was the word on our banner, I think, and our parents marched under the word 'duty.' These young people have their own flag and it has 'freedom' on it in big red letters. I wonder what will come next. Reform, maybe. Perhaps our young people are a little wild but that's their youth. There is nothing wild about us, Albert Galusha, we are old. But when we were young— Tell the truth! Didn't any one ever tell you that you were wild when you were a young man?"

Uncle Albert obediently searched the archives of his memory and found that some one actually had, although that did not matter. They were not discussing his youth, and he said so quite frankly.

"I don't worry a bit about our young people," Mrs. Simmons told him with a funny look in her eyes which still kept a little of their sparkle even if they were seventy years old. "Perhaps they are a little unconventional according to our standards, but I can remember when I nearly drove my mother crazy by learning to waltz. Perhaps you aren't old enough to remember



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when round dances were considered a scandal?" Uncle Albert was old enough, but he had forgotten all about that until Mrs. Simmons reminded him. "But I can. My parents thought a girl who permitted a man to put his arm around her in a ballroom was a shameless hussy. The world has to move. It can't stand still, Albert Galusha! I don't pretend to understand all that goes on now, but I know that it will work out all right. Our own generation seems to be the only one we really can understand. We can only have pity for the one that went before us and hope for the one that comes after us. So don't you worry. It won't do a bit of good. And I'll help you with your sample party. I'll come over and talk to Mrs. Ellsworth."

"I'll be much obliged," muttered Uncle Albert, but deep in his heart he did not feel obliged. Old Mrs. Peter Simmons sounded too much like Sue. He was sorry he had consulted her, or he would have been sorry if she had not given him the splendid idea of a sample party by which he could teach Sybil what a dance really should be.

Old Mrs. Simmons did go and talk with Aunt Susanne and the two found that they wore the same brand of rosy spectacles. Neither of them had any use for blue glasses. Mrs. Simmons also talked to her grandson, young Peter Simmons, who was home from Montana, where he had been building a railroad.

"Peter," she said cheerily, "old Albert Galusha is going to give a party for the young people who are living with him."

"Is he?" remarked young Peter carelessly if politely, for what did he care what old Albert Galusha was going to do.

"It's going to be a model party," went on Mrs.

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Simmons with an amused chuckle. "A sample for you wild young rebels. You are to go at eight and come home at twelve."

"The dickens we are!" Young Peter grinned, and his grandmother chuckled again.

"I should like you to go," she told him eagerly, "and enjoy it to the last moment. Indeed, I should like you to be the life of the party. I am afraid that it will be a bit dull if Mr. Galusha carries out his plans. Perhaps you and some of your friends can liven it up a bit."

"We can!" promised young Peter with a more expansive grin. "Don't you worry your honest gray head about that. Mr. Galusha's party shall not be dull. I just remembered that one of his girls is a peach, a snapping, black-eyed peach!" he exclaimed suddenly and he sat up straighter.

"Where did you see her?" asked his inquisitive grandmother.

"In the police court!" Young Peter's grin grew into a laugh when he remembered that police court. "Your poor old Albert Galusha had been snatched from a directors' meeting to come down and bail his young women out for speeding. You should have seen him! And you should have seen his young women! Two perfect peaches, but the black-haired one was the one who interested me. My taste runs to brunettes," he confided to his grandmother. "There is a buxom young Indian lass, Mary Fat Goose, out near my camp who is almost dark enough to suit me. How would you like her in the family?"

His grandmother looked up quickly, and then she laughed and took a dose of the medicine she had offered Uncle Albert. "I know better than to offer

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matrimonial advice to any young person," she said. "My ideas are made out of cloth they call old-fashioned. But I would just suggest, my dear Peter, that color like beauty is only skin deep and that goodness goes clear to the bone."

"I wonder if I will remember that?" asked Peter curiously.

"No, you won't. But it is just as well for you to hear it often, and it relieves my mind to say it. Old Albert Galusha is right, we old people do have a responsibility to you young people, and even if you do insist on buying your own experience we wouldn't be doing right if we didn't insist on showing you the experience we bought when we were young and ignorant and telling you what faded and what shrunk."

### XIII

THE first step Uncle Albert took toward giving his sample dance was to decide that Sybil and Kitty should have new frocks. The dancing frocks they had worn to Sybil's party, smart and pretty as they might be, would not be appropriate to the simple affair which he and old Mrs. Simmons had planned.

Uncle Albert had always left the accounts for his secretary to pay. Just by accident the first of the month had thrown half a dozen bills in his way, and he had looked at them curiously. He had not given Kitty nor Sybil an allowance. He had hesitated for some time whether to do so and then had decided that he would not. He had the old-fashioned idea that it was more womanly to be dependent on a man's generosity than to have a check book and a bank account, and as he was in favor of the womanliest kind of women he had given Kitty and Sybil only an occasional bill and told them to get what they wanted at certain shops and send the bills to him, and when they were short of cash they could tell him. They really would have no use for money, he argued, they had credit and the cars, and Maclean would buy their matinee tickets.

But as he glanced at the bills which the first of the month had thrown in his way he noticed one which never had been included among them before. "Helena" was the name scrawled on the thick, creamy envelope, and "Helena" was at the top of the creamy sheet he found inside. There was a long row of black figures on the thick, creamy sheet, also.

"Great Godfrey!" exclaimed Uncle Albert when his

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amazed eyes traveled down the long row of black figures and read the startling total, for neither Sybil nor Kitty nor Aunt Susanne had denied herself anything. Uncle Albert's amazed eyes ran from the startling total back to the items. He whistled as he put down the bill and took up another labeled "The House of Beauty." He whistled louder as he read how much it cost to be marceled and shampooed and massaged and manicured.

"Great Godfrey!" exclaimed Uncle Albert again. "This is an outrage! Bert is right about wasteful extravagance. I shall certainly speak to them. I want to be generous, but I shall not be imposed on."

When he called the women of his family into the library and spread the bills on the table before them the girls pouted and even Aunt Susanne looked surprised. Kitty murmured that she had understood that Uncle Albert wished them to have what the daughters of his friends had. The orchid velvet might have been expensive; she went farther and admitted honestly that it was expensive, but it was a love of a frock and exactly like Muriel Abercrombie's violet velvet.

Uncle Albert swore. His impatient exclamation startled himself more than it did Kitty or Sybil or even Aunt Susanne.

"Never mind anybody else," he said sharply. "I'm not talking about the Abercrombies. I'm talking of you and Sybil and Sue. I want you to have all that you should have but this——" He eyed the bill with frank disapproval. "Why you could take care of a couple of poor families on what this bill runs up to! I'm beginning to believe that Bert knows what he is talking about when he speaks of criminal and wasteful extravagance."

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"But you see we didn't have anything to begin with," Sybil explained hurriedly before he could say anything more about poor families, who had nothing to do with Helena's bill. "I wish you had seen the rags I brought with me! You would have been ashamed to look at me in them, Uncle Albert. Really you would! We had to begin at the very beginning and get everything. Perhaps it won't be so bad next month!"

"It hadn't better be," warned Uncle Albert. "As I say I wish to be fair, but I warn you that I shall not be imposed on."

"If you would give us an allowance," began Kitty, but Uncle Albert never gave her a chance to tell him what would happen if he did.

"I shan't!" he snapped. "I've told you what I want, and I expect you to have some regard for my wishes."

"You are so old-fashioned, Uncle Albert." Kitty smiled tolerantly. "Every girl has an allowance now. Muriel Abercrombie——"

Uncle Albert wanted to bellow. "You heard me!" he interrupted loudly. "And there is something else I want to speak to you about," he went on with a complete change of voice. "I am going to give a party."

"Uncle Albert! You ducky darling!" Sybil had her arms around him before he could say another word. "I love parties!" And she hugged him again.

"This won't be like your party. Not a bit!" Uncle Albert said hastily. "It will be a sane, sensible affair. Mrs. Simmons, Mrs. Peter Simmons," he explained as Sybil stopped hugging him and frowned—Sybil hated the words "sane" and "sensible" which were always on Uncle Albert's lips—"has made out a list of guests,

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and I shall invite them to come at nine and go home at twelve. Three hours is long enough for any party," he insisted, as Sybil drew away to look at him and shriek "Uncle Albert!"

"It is too long for some parties," agreed Kitty. "And you are going to make all the arrangements, Uncle Albert? How interesting!" She dared to giggle.

"You'll invite Arthur Parkyn?" Sybil was back fluffing Uncle Albert's hair. "He is on Mrs. Simmons' old list, isn't he?"

"You can look over the list when Maclean is through with it," promised Uncle Albert generously.

"If Arthur Parkyn isn't on it I'll send him a card anyway!" declared Sybil, dropping a light kiss on Uncle Albert's bald head. "We can't have a party without Arthur, can we, Kit?"

"I'm more interested in the arrangements than the guests," Kitty said, and she was surprised to find that she had told the truth. She discovered that she did not care a brass button whether Arthur Parkyn was invited to Uncle Albert's party or not, but she was very much interested in Uncle Albert's plans. "Perhaps, Uncle Albert, you would like to choose a gown for me." She made the suggestion with sweet dutifulness. "You did not like the pink I wore to Sybil's party. Perhaps Sybil and I should both have new gowns for a nine to twelve dance? Uncle Albert, you can go to Helena's with us and choose them," she offered graciously.

Uncle Albert eyed her with quick suspicion. Just what did she mean? Did she really wish to please him or did she want a new dress? And then he visualized the short-skirted, almost bodiceless frock she had worn

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at Sybil's party, and he shook his head. In his opinion they both surely needed new frocks.

"I'll go with you!" To hear Uncle Albert accept Kitty's gracious offer you might well have thought that they were to march to martyr fires instead of to a fashionable modiste. "I'm not sure that I can trust you to buy a proper party dress."

The amount of his bill was more comprehensible to Uncle Albert when he had crossed the threshold of Helena's exclusive establishment. "Nonsense! Damned nonsense!" he muttered to himself, and he added something about the tailor who had had his patronage for twenty years. When the pretty models arrayed in the season's choicest modes paraded before him, gay peacocks in the sun, he squirmed uneasily and wished he had not come. Helena's purring voice increased his desire to be at home by the library fire with a copy of the *Literary Digest* in his hands.

"Haven't you any with more stuff in them?" he asked desperately, as Sybil and Kitty politely waited for him to tell Helena what was thought of her choicest modes.

Helena shrugged her plump shoulders. "Oh, Mr. Galusha!" she exclaimed indulgently for every one but Uncle Albert had told her that her choicest modes were adorable, perfectly adorable. "The line of a young girl's neck and shoulder is so exquisite, so beautiful, like a flower. It would be a crime to conceal it. The skirt is short but only modestly so. It hangs straight and simple, not bunched up in the back or hooped in the hideous fashions of your youth. It is so chic, so suitable for youth. And see what satin, what lace, what embroidery! A work of art!" She sighed with the happy ecstasy of an artist who has



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captured an ideal as she ran her hand over the satin and pulled out a bit of lace. "I should never offer a model which was not modest and suitable as well as artistic, Mr. Galusha!" She was hurt that he should think she would. "See this?" And she called his attention to a peacock who wore a dark blue net which sparkled and gleamed with embroidery until it really was like the jeweled tail of a peacock and whose price was staggering. "Mr. Abercrombie has just purchased that for his daughter. A birthday gift," she whispered.

"Muriel——" began Kitty with an impish flash in her eyes, but Uncle Albert moved impatiently away.

He had had enough. Even if John Abercrombie was a fool that was no reason why Albert Galusha should make a spectacle of himself.

"I won't——" he began bravely enough, but as he turned away he faced the questioning gaze of Helena, of Kitty and Sybil, of the pretty models, and all of his courage fled. "Get what you choose," he mumbled weakly, false to all of the excellent resolutions with which he had crossed Helena's threshold. "I have nothing to say."

"Gentlemen seldom have," cooed Helena, while she managed a congratulatory lift of her eyebrows for Kitty and Sybil. "Gentlemen have nothing to do but admire and pay the bills." And she laughed as if the bill were the most amusing part of a modish frock.

"Yes!" For the first time since he had entered her establishment Uncle Albert agreed with Helena. "They pay the bills!"

"Where shall we go for lunch?" Sybil slipped her hand under Uncle Albert's arm as they left the shop which was as disturbing as it was exclusive. "You

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us to lunch with you down town, don't you, Uncle Albert?"

Uncle Albert was not sure that he did, but he asked curiously where they would like to lunch. "The Waloo Club?" he suggested. It was the only place new.

"Oh, grand!" exclaimed Sybil. "Uncle Albert, never was such a head of a family as you are!" "No, don't let us go to the Waloo, Syb," Kitty said lightly. "Let us entertain Uncle Albert to-day. He has been so dear about our new frocks. Just as a sharp contrast to Helena and her exclusive evenness let us take Uncle Albert to a cafeteria?" "What?" asked Uncle Albert, while Sybil pouted and objected: "Oh, Kitty!" Uncle Albert remembered dimly that he had heard the word "cafeteria" somewhere, but he had no idea what it meant.

"It will be good for him," Kitty went on with a smile. "He should know how the other half of the world eats, and he can never learn anything about it at the Waloo Club. Come on, and I'll take you to one of my old haunts!"

Sybil hung back hoping that Uncle Albert would reject that Kitty's suggestion was all nonsense and not go on lunching at the club. Sybil knew how the other half of the world ate if Uncle Albert did not. Uncle Albert's curiosity was aroused and he finally followed Kitty.

"Take a tray and tools!" she ordered gayly when they entered the big, clean, and busy cafeteria. "Many kinds of roast beef and browned potatoes have I got here," she told him encouragingly.

"What?" questioned Uncle Albert, and instead of bringing any tools he stood and looked at the long, long

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counter behind which was a row of women in neat black and white, and on which was such an array of food as Uncle Albert had never seen in all of his more than seventy years. Breads, salads, meats, soups, vegetables, puddings, pies, cakes, beverages, followed each other in orderly succession for as far as he could see. The procession seemed endless as it marched before him. Fortunately for him it was a dull moment, and there was no long, hungry queue before him to hold him back, and no long, hungry queue behind him to press him forward. He could take his time to select his lunch. "Tools!" He looked helplessly about. What did Kitty mean?

Kitty laughed as she showed him the napkin wrapped knife and fork and spoon and handed him a tray and led him to the counter. With a sniff and a scornful toss of her head Sybil followed.

"Your lunch is before you!" proclaimed Kitty with a gay wave of her own tray toward the long, long counter. "Take what you please."

"What a system! What a system!" muttered Uncle Albert, when he had marched before the counter and passed the checker. He had not the faintest idea what he had accumulated on his tray, but he discovered that it was full as he carried it to the table where Kitty led him.

"It's like life," Kitty told him merrily, as she brought him a glass of water. "Sit down, Syb, and turn down your nose. A cafeteria is like life, Uncle Albert, the life we believe in. Everything is out in plain sight, nothing is hidden or secreted, but everything is out on the counter where we can look it over and take what we want."

"H-m!" Uncle Albert looked back at the counter

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where everything was offered and shook his head. "I don't know about that, Kitty, about the wisdom of such display, but it is efficient," he admitted honestly. "There is no waste of time. I should say it is remarkably efficient."

"So is our way of living," insisted Kitty. "Just try it, and you will see how efficient it is!"

## XIV

"LOST something, Sybil?" On his way to the library, Uncle Albert stopped to question Sybil, who was looking carefully about the hall as if she had misplaced something.

Sybil looked up and flushed and stammered that it wasn't anything that mattered, and she might have left it in her room. She whirled up the stairs, while Uncle Albert shook his head and went on to the library where Aunt Susanne joined him for their nightly game of cribbage and discussion of the young people and their wild ideas and the old people and the perfect behavior which had been theirs when they were young people. They were in full swing when Hoskins came in with a folded paper on his tray.

"Is this yours, sir?" he asked, knowing very well that the paper did not belong to Uncle Albert. There was a world of meaning in his voice and another world of meaning in his manner. "I found it in the vestibule."

"All right, Hoskins. Your deal, Sue." Uncle Albert took the paper. "I suppose it is mine," he said, as Hoskins left the room. "No, by Godfrey! it isn't!" he exclaimed as he saw what it was. "Sue, it's a—*a* marriage certificate!" And he stared from the marriage certificate to Aunt Susanne with bulging eyes.

"A marriage certificate!" Aunt Susanne was as surprised as he was, for what was a marriage certificate doing in Uncle Albert's vestibule. "No, of course

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isn't yours, Albert!" Any one would know that Uncle Albert did not have a marriage certificate. Whose is it?" She leaned forward to see for herself, but Uncle Albert held it so she could not read the names on the white parchment.

"Sue!" Uncle Albert exclaimed in disgust, and he rattled his glasses more firmly on his nose and continued to hold the paper so that Aunt Sue could not read the names and learn to whom the certificate belonged before he could. "Sybil Molyneaux, spinster!" he read in amazement. He stopped and stared at Aunt Susanne again.

"Sybil Molyneaux!" repeated Aunt Susanne. "Why, that's our Sybil!" she said, as if Uncle Albert had asked her who Sybil Molyneaux was. "Albert, it's our Sybil!" And Aunt Susanne's eyes began to bulge as she stared at Uncle Albert.

"Sue, if that little imp——" began Uncle Albert, but Aunt Susanne would not let him finish.

"Who is it she has married, Albert? Who is it she has married?" And she would have taken the certificate from him to see for herself if Uncle Albert had not held it out of her reach until he had read the name.

"Arthur James Parkyn!" He read it in horror and disgust, and his old brain told him quickly to remember what he had seen in the sun room the night of Sybil's party. Perhaps he should not have been so surprised, but he was surprised and disgusted. "She's married Kitty's young man, Sue! What the dickens will Kitty say? This is a pretty kettle of fish! Little fool! Well, she can't bring her Arthur Parkyn here. I shan't have him! There are enough young people in the house now. I shan't have any more. She can

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go, and she won't get any check to take with her, either. I'm through with her! Talk about thanklessness and ingratitude and——"

"When were they married?" Aunt Susanne did not want to talk about thanklessness nor ingratitude, she wanted to learn more about Sybil's wedding.

Uncle Albert stopped short to ask the document. "They aren't married!" he exclaimed when he had searched in vain for a date. "There isn't any signature nor any date nor anything but the names! But I tell you, Sue, if that girl thinks she can run off and marry Arthur Parkyn and remain a member of my family she is mistaken. She can't deceive me and expect me to treat her like the others. What do you suppose she can think?" he asked helplessly.

"Ask her," advised Aunt Susanne, frowning at the certificate. "But keep your temper, Albert. Remember that Sybil isn't the only girl who has planned a runaway marriage. There was your own cousin, Alice Byfield——"

Uncle Albert turned to her and scowled. "I do wish," he said thickly, "that you would stop remembering the past and think about the present. Alice Byfield died twenty years ago. We don't have to consider her. But Sybil—Sybil——" He went to the bell and rang it long and loud.

When Hoskins came he wore an expression of deep sympathy and there was plenty of understanding in his manner, if his face was as expressionless as a blank sheet of paper, when Uncle Albert told him to send Miss Sybil to him at once.

"And you did exactly right to bring that certificate to me, Hoskins," went on Uncle Albert. "I should know something of what is going on in this house."

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"Yes, sir. That's what I thought, sir," murmured Hoskins as he went to find Miss Sybil.

Uncle Albert tramped up and down his library and exploded an occasional unintelligible word, while Aunt Susanne sat quietly behind the card table and kept her eye on the telltale certificate.

Sybil came at once. She ran up to Uncle Albert and put her hand on his arm.

"Hoskins said you wanted me," she told him in a charming and dutiful manner which suggested that she would drop everything and fly if Uncle Albert wanted her.

He stood still and stared at her. She looked so young, so frail, and as innocent as a high-school girl in her short-skirted frock of beaded maize georgette, with her yellow hair puffed about her ears in the ridiculous fashion of the day. Her little painted face had such a childlike expression that he would have sworn the certificate lied if the names were not on it in such very plain letters.

"What is it, Uncle Albert?" repeated Sybil softly, and she turned to Aunt Susanne and lifted her eyebrows questioningly. And then she saw the telltale certificate. The color rushed into her face, and she would have snatched the paper and crumpled it in her hand if Uncle Albert had not put his big paw on it first. "That's mine!" exclaimed Sybil defiantly. Fire flashed in each of her blue eyes. "That's mine!"

"Where did you get it?" demanded Uncle Albert. "Where did you get it, Sybil Molyneaux?"

"Why, Uncle Albert," stammered Sybil, and he thought she was just marking time until she could compose a satisfactory story.

"You can't run away and marry any man and expect



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to come back here and let things go on as they were!" he explained thickly. "You can't do it, Sybil! There's a decency, a—a——"

"Well, but Uncle Albert!" interrupted Sybil with a nervous little giggle which infuriated Uncle Albert.

"I tell you I won't have it!" he roared, and he brought his fist down on the card table with such a thump that all of the cards jumped up in surprise and fell back before his wrath.

At that Sybil's back stiffened and the amused, ashamed expression on her face changed to one entirely different. There was no amusement at all in the new expression she wore when she faced Uncle Albert.

"How will you stop it?" she asked coolly.

"H-how—how——" he began sputtering and was choked by the question he could not utter.

"Sybil!" exclaimed Aunt Susanne.

Sybil turned to her, and the words ran fast and furious from her lips like the water over Niagara.

"Well, what difference does it make to him when I marry or whom I marry? It makes me so furious to be watched and ordered around as if I were a baby! Any one would think that Uncle Albert would be glad to have us married! He's so crazy to have homes! But you can see for yourself how silly he acts! You might as well know now, Uncle Albert Galusha, that when I am married I shall marry to please myself and no one else! The idea!" She laughed shrilly.

"Sybil!" exclaimed Aunt Susanne again, and she left the card table to put her hand on Sybil's arm to remind her that words could sometimes come too thick and too fast.

"I should think you would be glad to have us all married!" repeated Sybil, pushing Aunt Susanne's

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quieting fingers away. "I'm sure there is plenty of room here," she told Uncle Albert, as if lack of room was the only reason why Uncle Albert could object to weddings. "You talk so much about the necessity of homes I should think you would be glad to have us all married," she told Uncle Albert for the third time.

He sighed deeply and introduced another phase of the question. "This Arthur Parkyn, this friend of your cousin Kitty's," he said significantly, "what do you know about him? Is he in a position to take care of a wife?" Uncle Albert felt to blame because he had not made sure of Arthur Parkyn's financial position before he allowed Arthur to become so much of a friend to Sybil and to Kitty.

Sybil shrugged her shoulders. "Oh, Uncle Albert, as if that matters! You know I'll have the money you are going to give me. A hundred thousand dollars! And of course Arthur must have something. But even if he hasn't a penny I shouldn't care!" proudly. "We could be happy on nothing! I know we could!"

"Yes, you could be happy on nothing!" Uncle Albert spoke with grim sarcasm, for he had an excellent idea of what nothing meant to Sybil. "Now look here, my girl," he began in as businesslike a fashion as his irritation would permit, "it is true that I do want you young people to have your own homes. I hope all of you will be married some day, but I don't want any of you married in this way, running off. It won't do! I shan't have it! You must pay some attention to my wishes. Now you be a good girl," he took her hand and patted it, "and listen to me. It won't hurt you to wait a while. You're young and you want to be sure of your own mind. Reckless

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marrying is just one way to the divorce courts. You want to be sure!"

"I am sure!" Sybil told him stubbornly, but she was not as defiant, and she did not pull her hand away from Uncle Albert. "I am sure, Uncle Albert! I adore Arthur Parkyn!"

"You want to be sure!" insisted Uncle Albert. "And I'll speak to young Parkyn."

Sybil gave a shriek and pulled her hand from him. "Uncle Albert, you can't! You shan't! Aunt Susanne, don't let him say a word to Arthur!"

"Why can't I speak to him?" rumbled Uncle Albert. "I shall just tell him that I don't approve of clandestine weddings and that I want you to wait until you are sure of your own mind. I guess I can tell him that!"

"Oh, but Uncle Albert!" She caught his arm and turned him around so that he looked into her face. "You see, Arthur doesn't know about this certificate! I don't want you to tell him a word!"

"Not know!" His jaw dropped as he looked at her. "What do you mean? How did you get it if Parkyn didn't give it to you?"

Sybil giggled. "I got it from a friend of mine who is a friend of the city clerk or whoever has them. I wanted it just for fun, and you needn't get so excited over it. Of course I shall always try to please you, Uncle Albert, but there are some things you haven't any business to interfere with, and my wedding is one of the things. I don't want you to say a word to Arthur Parkyn! He is my friend!"

"And Kitty's friend," Aunt Susanne reminded her.

"Oh, Kitty! Kitty doesn't care that for him." Sybil snapped her fingers. "She can't appreciate him at all! What difference does it make to her that

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Arthur is the grandest partner I ever had and that his taste in ties and socks is perfect! He always looks just exactly right. Kitty doesn't care a rap for looks! You know she doesn't! And I warned her! You heard me. I don't say I shall marry Arthur but——"

"You've got his name on this—this certificate," muttered Uncle Albert, wishing that he had an index to Sybil as he had to some of his big books.

"Oh, that!" she said airily. "That doesn't mean anything. Arthur Parkyn is the third man whose name has been on that certificate! I rubbed the others out. I write them in to see how they look. It makes it seem more real and when a name is written in I know at once if I want to keep it there. But I'll tell you this," she confided, her cheeks flushed again, "Arthur's name has been there longer than the name of any other man!"

"Sue!" Uncle Albert turned away from her. "Sue!" he murmured feebly, as if for help. "Sue!"

Sybil took the certificate and folded it. "If you are through with this I'll take it," she said pleasantly. "It's mine! I'm sorry if it annoyed you, Uncle Albert," she added with a pretty show of contrition which Uncle Albert knew meant nothing at all, "but you shouldn't allow yourself to be annoyed by trifles."

"Trifles!" gasped Uncle Albert. "Trifles! Oh, Sue!"

## XV

SYBIL came down to dinner in a dark blue gown so simple and inconspicuous that the family stared. Uncle Albert blinked as well. Could this demure young woman who slipped into the chair beside him be the butterfly Sybil, the girl who wrote a man's name in a marriage certificate to see if she wanted it there for keeps?

"You look as I like to see a little girl look," he said approvingly after he had blinked again. She had dazzled his poor old eyes so often that he felt as if he had exchanged the brazen sunlight of July for the irritating shadow of January.

"Why this gloom?" asked Vernon idly. "You look like a mourner at the feast."

"A mourner in midnight blue?" smiled Sybil, much pleased at the interest she had created. "This is the night I have my dancing class at the settlement," she explained with a pretty show of importance.

"Settlement!" exclaimed Bert, as if a settlement were a crime.

"Dancing class," repeated Kitty hastily to avoid the argument which Bert showed every symptom of beginning. "What do you mean?" She stared at Sybil. How puzzling people were! She had thought that Sybil's head was completely filled with lovers and clothes and food and good times, and now Sybil told her that there was room in her crowded head for a settlement dancing class.

Sybil smiled and nodded her yellow head. "Sure!

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You know I can dance," she said modestly. "I really dance better than I paint. I've always been crazy about dancing. I used to think I should like to go on the stage, be a professional, you know. Perhaps I shall some day."

"I know a professional dancer, a perfect corker!" declared Vernon proudly, before Uncle Albert could exclaim "Why, Sybil!" because Sybil wanted to be a professional dancer. Uncle Albert changed quickly to "Why, Vernon!" and he looked at his grand-nephew as if to remind him that a gentleman did not speak of his friendship with professional dancers in the bosom of his family.

"A professional dancer," repeated Sybil firmly, although she smiled at Uncle Albert. "But mother went into hysterics and said that no Galusha had ever been on the stage, and father swore, and so I decided to paint lamp shades. Even parents brought up in Mifflin could see that lamp shades were harmless and respectable. But you know there are a lot of girls in the factories and shops who don't know how to dance, and who are crazy to learn, so when Miss Morrison of Neighborhood Settlement House bought one of my lamp shades and asked me to teach dancing at the settlement I felt sorry for the poor things, and I said I would. The very first night I had thirty pupils of all ages and sizes and nationalities, and the last time I was there I had over a hundred. I have rather neglected my class since I have been here." Bert snorted scornfully. Of course she had! Bert sounded like Uncle Albert at his best. "But I am going over to-night. I teach them manners and deportment, too," she added importantly with never a glance at the snorting socialist, who could see nothing in a settle-

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ment but a sop from the dominant rich to the down-trodden poor, and who would have been glad to explain what he saw if Sybil would give him an opportunity.

"Manners and deportment!" exclaimed surprised Uncle Albert. He did not think that Sybil knew enough about manners and deportment to teach a kitten. He looked at Aunt Susanne to see what she thought, but Aunt Susanne was all smiling approval of Sybil's classes. She was not at all worried about Sybil's ability to teach.

"We have the best times!" Sybil nodded to him, and her face sparkled.

"But that's good Americanization work, Sybil!" exclaimed Kitty. "You never told me you were interested in that sort of thing!"

"I'm not when you call it Americanization work, but I am when you ask me to help a bunch of poor girls have a good time."

"A hundred girls!" exclaimed Vernon, interested in Sybil's class. "Take me with you, Sybil?"

Sybil daintily ate a spoonful of ice cream before she answered. "I don't think I'll take you, Vern. You are too dangerous. But I'll take Kitty, if she wants to come."

"Of course she wants to go," declared Uncle Albert, taking it upon himself to answer for Kitty. "I think that's splendid, Sybil, very sweet and womanly for a girl who has everything to try and do something for those who have nothing." And he looked even more approving than he sounded.

Kitty put down her spoon and looked at her uncle. She could not believe that he was expressing such hearty commendation of Sybil because Sybil was doing the very work that he had refused to let Kitty do.

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Goodness knows, she had tried to help people! Uncle Albert was just like all blind old people; he could not be fair.

"I've never had everything!" pouted Sybil.

"You've had food and clothes and a home without having to earn them yourself in a factory!" Uncle Albert reminded her of her blessings. "It is your duty to lend a hand to the girls who have to work for them. Philanthropy is very womanly, I think."

"Philanthropy!" Bert threatened to blow up.

"M-m," murmured Sybil vaguely, wondering why old people never missed an opportunity to preach. "Are you coming with me, Kitty?"

"I'd come with you if I didn't have another date," Vernon told her obligingly. "But I'll go next time."

"I want Kitty more than I do you. Uncle Albert may come if he pleases and see my philanthropic work. I don't suppose Uncle Albert has ever been inside of Neighborhood House!"

Uncle Albert never had. All he had ever done for Neighborhood House was to send an annual check to the board, and he murmured now that he didn't think he would go. It was all very well for the young people, but he didn't see what he would get out of it.

At that Bert exploded again, and this time he managed to fire a few sentences. "The question isn't what you can get out of a thing now," he told Uncle Albert fiercely. "It's what you can give. Your annual check isn't anything," he exclaimed unkindly. "I don't care how big it is. That's charity! It's an insult! Sybil is giving herself, and her time is a bigger gift than your annual check!"

Uncle Albert raised his head and looked at his namesake. Bert was the quietest member of his fam-



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ily, and Uncle Albert often regarded him with suspicion, for he remembered the copy-book phrase which he had written so laboriously when he was George's age, and which was all about still waters. So far Bert had been rather still, but Uncle Albert strongly suspected that he was very, very deep.

"I'll go if you will," he said impulsively, and without stopping to remember that Mr. Abercrombie had told him that settlements were like colleges, hot beds of socialism, and that Bert had been forbidden socialist centers.

"Oh, I'll go!" Bert exclaimed in a very royal manner. "But I don't approve of settlements. They are a vent for the rich and an insult to the poor."

"I'll go, Syb." Kitty thrust herself between Bert and his argument again. She really wished to go, for she was curious to see what Sybil was accomplishing by trying to reach girls through their toes. Kitty had tried to reach them through their heads, and it would be interesting to see Sybil's results. "Shall we make a family party and take Aunt Susanne, too?" she asked cordially.

"No!" Aunt Susanne refused the invitation before she could be said to have received it. "I am going to a movie with George. We are going to see a crook play," she exclaimed happily.

"Bandits and murders," added George, and his eyes glistened. "May I have another piece of cake? I'll bet they won't have a burglar alarm as good as yours, Uncle Albert! Burglars, even Italian burglars, couldn't get into your house, could they?" he asked as he stuffed the cake into his mouth in what Uncle Albert considered a disgusting fashion.

Uncle Albert was too disgusted now to answer, at

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least he never answered, but just looked at George, until Sybil jumped up and said that they never would get to Neighborhood House if they didn't start.

They found Arthur Parkyn and young Andy Macnamara on the steps, and in a way which only Sybil could explain Sybil drove away with Arthur in his roadster, and Andy followed Kitty into Uncle Albert's limousine which Bert was regarding with uplifted nostrils as if he had a very poor opinion of it. Kitty frowned. Really Sybil's methods were too raw. And Arthur! How could he let himself be picked up and carried off by a girl like Sybil. To be sure Sybil was the type which Arthur had always declared was his ideal. Kitty had small faith in Arthur's change of views, for so far as she could see he still wore the old opinions. She could not understand now how she had ever thought that she could regard him as anything but a friend, a poor, blind creature. Why, in fifty years he would be another Uncle Albert, while she—she— Andy Macnamara interrupted her thoughts with a laughing question about their destination, and she turned to answer him with a smile. Andy Macnamara interested her, for he was trying all sorts of experiments in his cereal factory and Kitty, like Disraeli, thought she would rather be interested than amused. Andy's experiments interested Bert as well as Kitty, and the discussion of them kept Uncle Albert awake, as they drove through the crowded streets to the big brick settlement house with its many lighted windows keeping a watchful eye on the neighborhood.

Kitty had been there before many times, but she had never attended a dancing class conducted by Sybil, and she was amazed at the pretty manner with which Sybil greeted her pupils.

1. The first step in the process is to identify the problem or issue that needs to be addressed. This involves gathering information and understanding the context of the problem.

2. Once the problem is identified, the next step is to define the objectives and goals of the project. This helps to clarify what needs to be achieved and provides a clear direction for the team.

3. The third step is to develop a plan or strategy to address the problem. This involves breaking down the problem into smaller, manageable tasks and determining the resources needed to complete each task.

4. The fourth step is to implement the plan. This involves putting the strategy into action and monitoring progress to ensure that the project is on track.

5. The final step is to evaluate the results of the project. This involves assessing the outcomes against the objectives and goals and identifying any areas for improvement.

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Bert had gone away to talk to the resident and ask if the settlement was helping the downtrodden poor as much as it was relieving the dominant rich.

Kitty watched Sybil and Arthur as they illustrated the proper position for dancing. Sybil's cheeks were pinker than her rouge, and her eyes were like stars. Arthur's eyes were bright, too, and he was laughing as he murmured into Sybil's ear. They danced together beautifully, and when they finished there was a deep-drawn breath which was like a sigh.

Kitty was conscious of a strange feeling in the corner of her chest where a girl is supposed to keep her heart. She remembered again that Sybil was the type for which Arthur had always expressed such hearty admiration, the type he had wished her to copy. Suppose—just suppose—— Although she had discovered that she had no use for Arthur except as a friend for lighter moments, she felt forlorn and neglected in spite of Andy Macnamara, who stood close to her and expressed admiration in voice and looks. She turned impatiently away from Andy to the dumpiest girl in the class, who happened to be near her.

"Would you like to try this with me?" she asked, as the pianist struck the chords of another dance, and he was disgusted with her voice because it trembled lightly.

"That's right, Kitty," murmured Uncle Albert approvingly. "Don't be afraid to follow a good example."

The dumpy girl could not tear her eyes from Arthur as he stood laughing with Sybil. "Huh!" she said stupidly to Kitty.

Altogether it was rather an illuminating evening for more than one of them. After that first disturbing

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"Why, Sophie Kazak, what a smart new dress!" Sybil cried. "How is your mother, Sarah? Fannie Rabinowitz, you are going to learn that new step to-night or I'll know the reason why. I suppose the babies are growing bigger every day, Mrs. Nelson? It isn't polite to feel a girl's dress, Olga!" She caught the inquisitive hands and held them. "Yes, this is satin. I bought it at the Big Store. Now, girls, get in line!"

"Clever little thing!" Andy murmured in Kitty's ear. "I didn't suppose she could manage any one, even herself."

"Oh, Sybil can manage. It is some years since I was told that one never should judge by appearances," advised Kitty.

"How is one to judge if not by appearances?" he wanted to know. "The good heart and the helping hand are not as striking as the flashing eye and the sparkling smile. Will you join the dance?"

"Not with you. I fancy we are expected to dance with the pupils."

"Your cousin and Parkyn are going to dance together."

So they were. With her own two eyes Kitty saw Sybil clap her hands to secure the attention of her pupils, and with her own two ears Kitty heard Sybil explain that she had asked Mr. Parkyn to come down to-night so that she could show them how a man should dance with a girl. It was so much easier to show them with a man than with another girl. There should be at least an inch of space between the partners. See! She put her hand on Mr. Parkyn's arm and showed them the inch of space.

"An inch!" snorted Uncle Albert from behind Kitty.

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moment Kitty threw herself into the dancing with all the enthusiasm which had made her such a successful organizer. She was determined to make Arthur Parkyn and Uncle Albert see that she could manage these girls as easily as Sybil did. Andy Macnamara did not need to be shown. Her success was proved at the close of the evening when Miss Morrison told her that several of the girls had recognized her as a worker for the League of Women Voters, and they wanted her to come and talk to them on politics.

Uncle Albert promptly frowned.

"There is a lot of interest among the girls," went on Miss Morrison, for she could not know that she was waving a red rag before Uncle Albert's eyes. "I believe they could be formed into an effective organization. You could do it, Miss Forsythe."

A "yes, thank you," trembled on Kitty's lips. She knew she could do it, and it would be work she loved, but she raised her eyes and saw frowning Uncle Albert and remembered that she had been sold to Uncle Albert for a hundred thousand dollars.

"I want your cousin to talk to us on practical socialism," went on Miss Morrison, waving a second red rag before Uncle Albert.

Kitty giggled. She just had to giggle when she saw Uncle Albert and Miss Morrison and recognized the two red rags. "I don't believe I can do anything now, Miss Morrison," she said regretfully. "Can I, Uncle Albert? And I am afraid that Bert can't talk to the girls on practical socialism. He can't, can he, Uncle Albert?" Suddenly her eyes twinkled. "But I could talk on socialism, couldn't I, Uncle Albert? And Bert could organize the girls into a political organization, couldn't he, Uncle Albert?" She giggled again.

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Uncle Albert stared at Kitty in something which was like alarm. Suppose these irresponsible young people of his should all change coats? There was nothing in her contract to prevent Kitty from talking socialism all day if she wanted to. Politics were forbidden by her contract. Lord, how quick they were! A man had to have his wits very close about him to keep up with them. Just at that moment his wits could only tell him to mutter crossly that it was late and time to go home. He would talk to Kitty and to Bert later, in the safe seclusion of his home. He felt more commanding in his own home. He would ask Kitty and Bert if they thought they were playing fair, but he would not argue with them before calm-faced Miss Morrison, who followed them to the door with a hospitable wish that they would come again.

"All of you," she said. "We need all the help we can get."

Sybil drew a sigh which came from very tired toes. "I hope your ice box holds something good to eat, Uncle Albert," she exclaimed as they went down the steps. "I'm starved!"

"Why not stop at the Waloo and have a little supper?" suggested Andy Macnamara. "I'm sure you have earned it."

"Oh!" Sybil stood still to pat his arm. "What a duck of a Mr. Macnamara! We should love to go to the Waloo, shouldn't we, Uncle Albert? You want to go, don't you, Kitty? Come on, Arthur! Where did you park your car?"

"It's late," objected Uncle Albert sternly. "It's too late. Where is Bert?"

"It's just the right time," insisted Kitty, putting her hand under Uncle Albert's arm and leading him to his



## XV

SYBIL came down to dinner in a dark blue gown so simple and inconspicuous that the family stared. Uncle Albert blinked as well. Could this demure young woman who slipped into the chair beside him be the butterfly Sybil, the girl who wrote a man's name in a marriage certificate to see if she wanted it there for keeps?

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"It's late," objected Uncle Albert sternly. "It's too late. Where is Bert?"

"It's just the right time," insisted Kitty, putting her hand under Uncle Albert's arm and leading him to his

## XV

SYBIL came down to dinner in a dark blue gown so simple and inconspicuous that the family stared. Uncle Albert blinked as well. Could this demure young woman who slipped into the chair beside him be the butterfly Sybil, the girl who wrote a man's name in a marriage certificate to see if she wanted it there for keeps?

"You look as I like to see a little girl look," he said approvingly after he had blinked again. She had dazzled his poor old eyes so often that he felt as if he had exchanged the brazen sunlight of July for the irritating shadow of January.

"Why this gloom?" asked Vernon idly. "You look like a mourner at the feast."

"A mourner in midnight blue?" smiled Sybil, much pleased at the interest she had created. "This is the night I have my dancing class at the settlement," she explained with a pretty show of importance.

"Settlement!" exclaimed Bert, as if a settlement were a crime.

"Dancing class," repeated Kitty hastily to avoid the argument which Bert showed every symptom of beginning. "What do you mean?" She stared at Sybil. How puzzling people were! She had thought that Sybil's head was completely filled with lovers and clothes and food and good times, and now Sybil told her that there was room in her crowded head for a settlement dancing class.

Sybil smiled and nodded her yellow head. "Sure!

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You know I can dance," she said modestly. "I really dance better than I paint. I've always been crazy about dancing. I used to think I should like to go on the stage, be a professional, you know. Perhaps I shall some day."

"I know a professional dancer, a perfect corker!" declared Vernon proudly, before Uncle Albert could exclaim "Why, Sybil!" because Sybil wanted to be a professional dancer. Uncle Albert changed quickly to "Why, Vernon!" and he looked at his grand-nephew as if to remind him that a gentleman did not speak of his friendship with professional dancers in the bosom of his family.

"A professional dancer," repeated Sybil firmly, although she smiled at Uncle Albert. "But mother went into hysterics and said that no Galusha had ever been on the stage, and father swore, and so I decided to paint lamp shades. Even parents brought up in Mifflin could see that lamp shades were harmless and respectable. But you know there are a lot of girls in the factories and shops who don't know how to dance, and who are crazy to learn, so when Miss Morrison of Neighborhood Settlement House bought one of my lamp shades and asked me to teach dancing at the settlement I felt sorry for the poor things, and I said I would. The very first night I had thirty pupils of all ages and sizes and nationalities, and the last time I was there I had over a hundred. I have rather neglected my class since I have been here." Bert snorted scornfully. Of course she had! Bert sounded like Uncle Albert at his best. "But I am going over to-night. I teach them manners and deportment, too," she added importantly with never a glance at the snorting socialist, who could see nothing in a settle-

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"It's late," objected Uncle Albert sternly. "It's too late. Where is Bert?"

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## XVI

BERT reached home first, and when the others entered the house they saw him coming from the gallery. What he had seen there evidently had not pleased him, for he wore a puzzled frown. Sybil came in noisily. She had had a good time, and she was quite willing that every one should know it.

"Hello, deserter!" she called gayly, when she saw Bert. "What became of you? Why didn't you come to the Waloo with us, and join Uncle Albert in a glass of buttermilk? I am sure Mr. Macnamara would have been willing to buy you one."

Bert did not tell Sybil what had become of him, but he followed Kitty up the stairs to her rosy sitting room and told her. Kitty looked surprised when he came in and closed the door carefully behind him.

"A funny thing happened to-night, Kit," he began at once. "I ran across a man, an Italian, from Patesta," he added when Kitty failed to show any special interest because Bert had met an Italian at Neighborhood House. "And he told me a rum story. I don't know what you learned at that college of yours about art and superstition and how much you know of the Patestans and their famous picture? It was painted by Raphael, and everything good which happened to the Patesta family after the first old villain hung it in the cathedral was attributed to the picture until a superstition grew that Patesta would flourish only while the picture remained in its possession. During a local disturbance the painting was taken from the cathedral

## *These Young Rebels*

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and hung in the chapel of the castle where the prince and his sons could guard it. The people were allowed to go in by a side door and pray to it whenever they pleased. It was not a big picture but it became a very famous one. The Prince of Patesta lost his money and began to dispose of the art treasures which filled his old castle. The people sent word that if he sold the Raphael they would kill him. The old prince was afraid and kept the picture hanging in his chapel. But he had two sons. One was a traditional villain, and the other was a white lamb and became a priest. I believe he came to America and was a missionary to the Indians. When the old prince died the villain, who succeeded him, shut the side door of the castle and refused to let the people in to pray to the Raphael. They rebelled naturally, and when they had fought their way in they found that the picture had lost all of its beautiful color and was as black as night."

"Why, Bert Galusha!" Kitty's attention, which had wavered while Bert told his story, was caught at last, and she faced him with wide, eager eyes. "What do you mean?"

"That was fifteen years ago," went on Bert. "Just before Gian Moroni came to this country. He said the Patestans don't believe that their picture lost its color when the wicked prince shut them out of the castle. Gian tells a weird story about a rich American and a yacht which was anchored off the coast. He swears the American offered a fortune for the picture and that the prince wanted to sell it but he was afraid of the people. The American told him to cover a copy of the Raphael with black paint and deceive the people and let him have the original painting. The Patestans declare the prince did this and hung the fake



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in the chapel because they have had nothing but bad luck since. They even blame the war on the loss of the Raphael. Gian has heard that the original is in Waloo."

"Why—why——" gasped Kitty, for immediately her thoughts flew to a gallery in Waloo which held a blackened old picture. "Bert, you don't think Uncle Albert——" She could not finish her sentence and put a period to it because she was almost sure that Bert did mean Uncle Albert, and she was astonished and a little frightened.

"That's what I want to know," exclaimed Bert, and he scowled. "That blackened picture in Uncle Albert's gallery wouldn't be so strange in itself, but Uncle Albert acts so confoundedly mysterious. He won't tell you a word about it. If he got it in an honest way and it is a real picture why doesn't he have it cleaned up and show the world what it is? If it's the Patesta Raphael, Kitty, he doesn't dare! Gian said that the people have sworn to get it back. They will stop at nothing to put it in the cathedral again and bring good luck back to the town."

"You didn't tell this Gian anything about Uncle Albert's picture?" asked Kitty sharply, for even if Bert was a socialist he should not tell tales about his great-uncle, but Bert declared that he would. If he were positive that Uncle Albert's picture was the Patesta Raphael he certainly would help to put it back in the Patesta cathedral.

"The picture doesn't belong to Uncle Albert. I don't care how much he paid for it," he insisted. "And it doesn't belong to Prince Patesta. It belongs to the people. All creative work does! You know what I think about that, Kitty. If Patesta sold this picture

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he stole it from his people first, and if Uncle Albert bought it, if he was the rich American with the yacht, well, you know the receiver of stolen goods is as bad as the thief. Uncle Albert shan't rob the people. You never heard, did you," he went on in a quieter voice, "how long that old canvas has 'hung in his gallery?"

"No, I never did. I don't know anything about it except what Uncle Albert said that first night. He did act funny when you said the Italian government was trying to locate some of the pictures which had been stolen from Italy. But, Bert, Uncle Albert couldn't be that Gian's rich American! Why, Uncle Albert couldn't be a thief and a cheat! You know he couldn't!"

"Uncle Albert to-day isn't the Uncle Albert of fifteen years ago," reminded Bert. "I thought perhaps you might know something. Uncle Albert seems fair enough for a plutocrat. I've looked about pretty carefully at the factory and here in the house, and I can't really find that he's doing anything he shouldn't. But this place makes me sick, Kitty, absolutely sick! And that gallery! Every picture in it must have been looted from some town. You bet I'd help send them all back! I wish you'd see what you can learn about that one painting."

"If I do it will be to prove that Uncle Albert is honest and true!" declared Kitty. "I don't believe he ever bought that Patesta Raphael! And I don't believe that he ever told any old prince to cover a picture with black paint!"

"You don't?" Bert came closer. "Well, to-morrow you go into the gallery and look at that old blackened canvas, and if you can't trace the letters P and A and

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then a space and S in the upper left hand corner then there is something the matter with my eyes, that's all!"

"Oh, Bert!" The color left Kitty's face when she heard what Bert had found in the upper left hand corner of one of Uncle Albert's pictures, and she really was frightened. "That man!" she exclaimed, and she told Bert of the guest at Sybil's party, who had put his nose to the old canvas, and who had a macaroni type of face. Andy Macnamara had said he had. And Kitty had recognized his Neapolitan accent herself. Perhaps he was from Patesta?

But Bert looked dubious. "Moroni said that the Patestans had just succeeded in locating the picture. Perhaps you are right, Kitty. But the committee has just sailed from Naples. And don't you remember the other night when Uncle Albert was talking about his travels he said he had never taken but one trip on a yacht and he would never take another? I'll bet that one trip was to Italy, and he's afraid to take another."

"Wh-what can they do to Uncle Albert?" whimpered Kitty, for she did remember that Uncle Albert had acted oddly about his one yachting trip. She had thought at the time that the poor old dear had probably been horribly seasick in a small boat, but Bert might be right.

"Oh, I don't suppose they will do anything but scare him to death and make him the laughingstock of the world. But it will be his own fault. He has been asked to return the picture if it is the Patesta Raphael, and he has refused, because it is still in his gallery. Naturally the Patestans will take it if they can. I am thinking of Uncle Albert, too, Kitty. The old boy has a good side, and I can see that it wasn't altogether his fault that he piled up such a fortune. He just took

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advantage of circumstances. And he is an old man, and I don't want him scared to death. At the same time he shouldn't take what belongs to a community and shut it up in a private gallery. But nothing will happen until the Patestans get here. Moroni assured me of that. All we can do is to keep our eyes and ears open and learn if Uncle Albert was the thief. If he was——"

"We could warn him!" suggested Kitty eagerly.

"We could, but I don't know as we would. It might make his old heart stop beating. You don't want to scare an old man. And you know how excited Uncle Albert gets. No, we mustn't say a word to any one until we are sure, and then if that picture is the Patesta Raphael and Uncle Albert refuses to give it up I'll send it back myself. Uncle Albert has no right to it!"

"No, I don't suppose he has, but we can't let him be scared and made into a laughingstock. He's proud as well as stubborn. It would kill him. I suppose you are right, Bert, and we can't say anything until we know more. Oh, dear, what a muddle it is!"

"If Uncle Albert hadn't piled up more money than a man should have he wouldn't have been able to buy stolen pictures." Bert found a moral in the muddle and quickly showed it to Kitty. "But don't bother your head about him, Kit. Nothing will happen for several weeks and we will know something by then. Just keep your eyes and ears open. Good-night." And he went away, leaving Kitty in a perfect turmoil.

What an amazing story Bert had told her. She refused to believe that Uncle Albert harbored stolen pictures even if he had taken one yachting trip and possessed a black old painting. It was absurd! But Bert was so sure. She shivered as she made ready for bed.

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She discovered that she was very fond of her queer old uncle, and she did not want him frightened nor made into a laughingstock. But how could she prevent it? She wished that Bert had kept his story and his suspicions to himself so long as she could do nothing. She would worry about Uncle Albert until she would not sleep a wink. And she was so tired! But if the old black picture in the gallery was all right why did Uncle Albert make a mystery of it? Indeed she would learn all she could about that painting. How could she help her uncle if she knew nothing?

Her thoughts went around and around like a merry-go-round, but in spite of their dizzy whirl she did go to sleep, for she was too tired to stay awake and wonder about Uncle Albert. When she opened her eyes the April sun was streaming into her room, and she jumped up happily. It was not until she met Uncle Albert in the breakfast room that she remembered that he might be a rascal. No man ever looked less like a rascal than Uncle Albert as he ate his bacon and drank his coffee and snapped at dilatory George. Kitty swallowed twice and tried to think of a question which would lead him unwittingly to the heart of the mystery, but before she could form the first word, Uncle Albert had pushed back his chair, and was on his feet reminding Vernon that time and business wait for no man, and telling George that he had finished his breakfast, although George mumbled that he wanted another waffle. In a noisy bustle they had gone, and Kitty's question was still on her tongue.

She went into the gallery and stared at the old black picture in its dingy frame. No, there was nothing wrong with Bert's eyes, for when she bent closer and looked carefully she could see the letters P and A

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and then a little space before an S. The letters were in red, and they showed through the black paint which covered the canvas. She frowned and sighed. She hated to think that Uncle Albert would buy a picture which meant so much to a community as the Patesta Raphael meant to the Patestans if Bert's story was true. And although Bert was a rabid socialist he always told the truth. Kitty had never known him to tell anything else. She shook her head at the old canvas and wished that it had a tongue.

There were soft steps behind her, and she swung around to see Hoskins, who was straightening the little catalogues, which Uncle Albert kept in the gallery to help visitors, and pushing back the chairs.

"Hoskins," she said quickly, "you know a lot about these pictures, don't you?"

"Not as much as Mr. Galusha, Miss Forsythe, but I know something."

"Do you know how long Uncle Albert has had this one?" Her finger trembled as she pointed it to the blackened canvas in the corner.

Hoskins shook his head. "No, miss, I don't. I've only been with Mr. Galusha for about ten years, and he had the picture then. I remember I thought it was a strange old thing to be in his collection and I looked it up in the catalogue and there wasn't a mention of it. I've heard Mr. Galusha tell the story of that one," and he pointed to a Lippo Lippi, "and that one," his finger turned to a Holbein, "but I never heard him say a word about the one in the corner. It's a strange picture, isn't it, miss? Perhaps it isn't worth putting in the catalogue."

"Very strange," agreed Kitty, taking a catalogue and turning the pages quickly. Funny she had not

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thought of looking in it before, but Hoskins was right, the catalogue did not even mention the picture with the red letters in the upper left hand corner.

She felt blue and depressed when she left the gallery and she went to find Aunt Susanne. Perhaps Uncle Albert had told Aunt Susanne more than he had told Hoskins.

She found Aunt Susanne in the nursery with the twins. Bud was on his small stomach crawling over the floor and begging Aunt Susanne to come and crawl with him.

"I wish I could, dearie. Really I do!" Kitty heard Aunt Susanne say, and her voice was full of distress because she had to refuse Bud something. "But my old bones would never let me get down on the floor."

"You could try, couldn't you?" glowered Bud, writhing and twisting to let her see how easy it was. "I didn't know I could do it 'til I tried, and then I found I could."

Kitty forgot Uncle Albert and Patesta for a moment as she watched Bud. "What ever are you doing?" she asked.

"It's the Zoo," Aunt Susanne explained in a worried voice. "He has just remembered the snakes and is playing that he is one. He wants me to be a snake, too. Dear me, Kitty, I am almost sorry his Uncle Albert ever took him to the Zoo."

"I'm a snake, too," piped Sis from a nest of chairs and pillows. "I'm a nice mamma snake watching the babies."

Kitty sniffed. "Oh, be an up-to-date snake, Sis, and come out and crawl with the papa snake! Remember that now you have as much chance as Bud to be presi-

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dent of these United States," she giggled. "Don't be so utterly old-fashioned."

"Kitty," Aunt Susanne spoke timidly, "do you think it is quite fair to your Uncle Albert to talk to Sis that way?"

"I don't see how it can possibly hurt her," declared Kitty impatiently. "She'll have to learn some day that mothers no longer shut themselves up in homes with their children. They are out in the world helping to make it decent for the children to live in."

"I'd like to come out!" Sis' bright, curly head popped out of her nest.

"You stay where you belong!" roared Bud. "The place for mammas is in their homes!"

"Dear me!" exclaimed Kitty. "How much the child sounds like Uncle Albert!"

"You stay there," went on Bud with another roar at his twin. And then he threw himself flat on the floor and began to sob loudly.

In a second Aunt Susanne was on her knee beside him. "What is the matter with Aunt Susanne's big boy?" She begged him to tell her.

"I want you to—to be an auntie snake," he moaned.

Aunt Susanne looked from Bud to Kitty. "It isn't that I don't want to, Kitty," she explained seriously. "But I just don't dare!"

"I shouldn't think you would. It's perfect nonsense!" declared Kitty. "Stop crying, Bud! And if you want Aunt Susanne to play with you think of something she can do."

"How can I?" wailed Bud, turning over on his back to look at her. "I'm a creeping, crawling snake. I expect I'll be a snake as long as I live. And I want my Aunt Susanne to be a snake with me!"



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His Aunt Susanne eyed the floor as if she actually were contemplating crawling over it. Kitty burst into a laugh and pulled her up and hugged her.

"You darling old silly! Now, Bud," coaxingly, "you know there are a lot of animals besides snakes. Lions, and tigers, and kangaroos and all sorts. Aunt Susanne can be one that stands on two feet, a bird, you know."

"Then she's an ostrich!" declared Bud without taking a second to think. "And she has to put her head in the sand like my book said an ostrich always does. Her head away down in the sand beside her two feet!"

At that even worried Aunt Susanne laughed. "It would be as easy for me to be a snake as an ostrich," she said. "Get your book, Buddie, and show me. Was there anything you wanted of me, Kitty?"

"No," lied Kitty, for she could see that the moment was not propitious. Aunt Susanne's head was too full of snakes and ostriches and twins to leave any room for pictures now. She left them turning over the pages of Bud's book and went back to the gallery to stare at the uncommunicative picture.

"I shall just have to keep my eyes and ears open," she decided. "But if that really is the Patesta Raphael I don't believe that Uncle Albert knows it!"

And then she remembered how oddly Uncle Albert had spoken the night Bert had said that Italian agents were hunting Italian pictures and she sighed. She scarcely knew what to think. Bert's story sounded unbelievable. She made up her mind that she would not believe it. So long as there was nothing she could do to verify it she just would not believe Bert's story.

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was too weird. But why couldn't Uncle Albert tell n about that funny old picture? It was Uncle ert's own fault if he were suspected of being a iver of stolen goods.

## XVII

GIAN MORONI's story of the disappearance of the Patesta Raphael might be true, Kitty did not know, but as she looked at Uncle Albert that evening she was positive that Uncle Albert was neither the hero nor the villain of the tale. Uncle Albert looked like an honest old man. And he was honest. Kitty knew he was.

"God gave women intuition," she said to herself, "so that they would know the truth. I'd rather believe my feminine sixth sense than a dozen of Bert's Patestans."

She coaxed Uncle Albert into the gallery after dinner and questioned him about his pictures as if she really were interested in them. Uncle Albert beamed. He liked to talk about his collections. But when Kitty's artless questions led her to the corner where the mysterious picture hung, Uncle Albert's mouth shut like a trap, and he turned quickly to a Vandyke on the other side of the gallery. Kitty sighed. There certainly must be some mystery about that old canvas or Uncle Albert would not act so mysteriously about it. And there was something about Uncle Albert which kept her from questioning him. He seemed to have built a stone wall around him, and Kitty could not climb over it nor see through it. But she still believed in Uncle Albert's honesty.

She told Bert she believed in it the next afternoon, which was Sunday, and Bert had asked her to walk over to the Art Museum to see an exhibition of indus-

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trial art. Sybil walked with them as far as the corner, where she turned away with a gay wave of her hand.

"Aunt Susanne would be shocked if I told her I was going to a studio tea," she said, "so it was only kind to let the dear old thing think my heart was set on industrial art. 'By."

Bert gazed at the broad white façade of the Art Museum as they went up the steps with a throng of people.

"I hate Uncle Albert's smug little gallery," he told Kitty. "But I love this great municipal place. It belongs to the people! You understand, don't you, Kitty, why I think creative work should belong to the people? A man does steal it if he shuts it up in a private gallery as Uncle Albert does. Just look at the crowd!" And he called her attention to the groups of all nationalities and ages and classes which stood about the wide corridors or tramped through the various rooms. "Hello! There's my friend, Moroni! Wait a minute. I want to speak to him." And he left her to hurry across the gallery to speak to a man who was just leaving the room.

Kitty's eyes followed him, and as soon as they found Gian Moroni her feminine sixth sense told her not to like him. He was tall and thin and very dark as to hair and skin. He did not look half, not a quarter, as honest as neat Uncle Albert. "I would believe in Uncle Albert before I would in that oily black man every time," she told herself, as she mentally contrasted the two men.

From merely tolerating Uncle Albert, which was what she had done when she became a part of his made-to-order family, Kitty had grown very fond of him. "You couldn't help it," she would murmur ex-

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cusingly, as if she had to have a reason for her change of feeling. And now as she stared at Gian Moroni she told herself a little fiercely that no matter what that black, oily Italian said she would be for Uncle Albert first and last and all the time. Uncle Albert was her old great-uncle and she would believe in him until the crack of doom and possibly longer than that, if the crack of doom left her anything to believe with.

Bert joined her shortly, and Gian went on into the corridor. Kitty looked at her cousin eagerly. She wondered if Bert really believed his oily, new friend. Bert smiled at her encouragingly.

"It's all right," he said. "Moroni swears that he will know the minute the Patestans arrive, and he will tell me. He wants to see Uncle Albert's gallery."

"Bert! You wouldn't show it to him?" Kitty's eyes flashed. "Not without telling Uncle Albert! You couldn't!"

"I didn't promise to show it to him. Keep your hair on, Kit!" He laughed at her. "But there isn't any reason why I shouldn't take him into the gallery. Uncle Albert has told us often enough that his home is our home, and if you can't take your friends to it I don't think the place is much of a home."

"Friends!" Kitty's lip curled. "I should hate to have that black, oily man for a friend. I don't like his looks!"

Bert laughed scornfully. Really, girls were too unreasonable with their foolish likes and dislikes. "We can't all be beautiful," he said in a voice to match his laugh. "We can't all have melting eyes and perfect noses!"

"Perhaps not, but we can all be clean!" Kitty spoke sharply and she looked at Bert sharply. Surely if old

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Bert had to choose between Gian Moroni and Uncle Albert he would not hesitate a second, and yet Bert talked as if he would choose the Patestan! Dear me, what a horrid tangle it was! When she went to live with Uncle Albert she had thought there would be nothing to bother her but the killing of time, and yet here she was in a snarl which was being tied tight around poor, harmless Uncle Albert, and she could do nothing to help him. No wonder she sighed and felt as useless as a knotted bit of string.

Bert looked down at her puzzled little face. He was very fond of his young cousin and very proud of what she had done. He had told her the story Gian had told him because he liked to tell her things and see her eyes grow big with amazement and watch her rosy mouth turn into a big round O of wonder, but he did not want her to worry over old Uncle Albert. He felt quite capable of taking care of a dozen Uncle Alberts, and, no matter what happened, Uncle Albert was only reaping what he had sowed. That was what all multimillionaires did, according to Bert. They planted and then they reaped, and their crop depended entirely on what they had planted. Bert did not see that anything more unpleasant than a lot of disagreeable publicity and the loss of a picture could happen to Uncle Albert if he acted square and straight, and he told Kitty so.

"You may be right," Kitty said, and she sighed. "But I wish you had never gone to Neighborhood House to hear stories about poor old Uncle Albert. I hope to goodness nothing happens, any way, until after Uncle Albert's party. The old dear is counting on it as such a lesson to his wild young rebels!" And she stopped sighing to laugh as she remembered how

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hard Uncle Albert was working to teach his wild young rebels a lesson.

Uncle Albert's party had been postponed for one cause and another so that it was several weeks after he had planned it before it took place. The invitations had asked the guests to come at nine o'clock and told them that they were to go at twelve o'clock, but not one of the guests obeyed the invitation and came at nine o'clock, although Uncle Albert and Aunt Susanne with Kitty and Sybil between them, to make an attractive reception sandwich, stood just inside the living-room door to welcome them. Sybil had hotly declared that such a reception sandwich was unnecessary, that the guests would only come to dance, they would never want to waste the evening saying: "How do you do? It was so good of you to ask me." All they would want to do was to wave their hands and shout: "Howdy! Isn't it a great night?" But Uncle Albert had declared explosively that while that might be true of the Bohemians he knew it would not be true of the young people whose fathers he met in business, and anyway an evening given over to the exchange of social courtesies could never be considered wasted.

Many of the arrangements which Uncle Albert had made for his party caused Sybil to protest hotly and made Kitty smile with good-natured tolerance.

When Kitty and Sybil came down Uncle Albert discovered that his idea of a modest dancing frock for a young girl was not Helena's idea, and he would have sent his grandnieces back to their rooms if he had thought they had frocks with any more material in them. Really Kitty and Sybil looked charming in their satin frocks draped with tulle, rose for Kitty and

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her favorite yellow for Sybil. They looked like flowers, Vernon told them with an extravagant bow, and he ran up the steps to the piano and played a few bars of Mendelssohn's "Spring Song" as a tribute to their springlike charm.

The first guest to arrive at about nine-thirty, half an hour after the invitation had told him to come, was Arthur Parkyn, and as soon as she saw him Sybil broke away from the reception sandwich and took him into the gallery where the musicians were laughing over the program which Uncle Albert had given them, waltzes and polkas and schottisches, four of each alternately.

It was after ten o'clock that Uncle Albert gave a jump and nudged Kitty, who stood next to him, and whispered sharply: "Here he is!"

"What?" asked Kitty, and she looked up and up until her eyes met the eyes of the young man who had greeted Uncle Albert with great friendliness, and who turned to her with more than friendliness in his face. He looked as if he agreed perfectly with Vernon that Kitty was like a lovely flower.

"Young Peter Simmons, Kitty," exclaimed Uncle Albert as if he were announcing the Prince of Wales. "The grandson of my good friend, Mrs. Peter Simmons."

"How do you do, young Mister Peter Simmons?" murmured Kitty politely.

"I do very well," Peter answered promptly, all admiration of Kitty in her rosy satin and tulle. "And I can see that you are doing very well, too. Very well, indeed! How long are you going to stay here? How many dances are you going to give me? Why didn't I know a month ago, a year ago, that Mr. Galusha



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had such a charming— What are you in his made-to-order family, anyway? A granddaughter or a grandniece?"

"Ask him," suggested Kitty, with a bewitching tilt to her pretty head and a glance at Uncle Albert, who stood looking at them as if at last he were satisfied with Kitty.

"Some other time," grinned Peter. "Just at present I'd rather dance with you. Come on."

"Oh, I can't dance yet. I'm on the reception committee." But he refused to accept that as any excuse at all. "And you must meet Aunt Susanne and Sybil." For Sybil had come back for a moment to tell Kitty with a giggle about Uncle Albert's funny old program. "Mrs. Ellsworth," she said more formally, "may I present Mr. Simmons. And Miss Molyneaux, Mr. Simmons."

Peter nodded to Sybil, but when he saw Aunt Susanne a broad grin spread itself over his face. "Well, upon my word!" he exclaimed, and he took both of Aunt Susanne's hands. "See who is here! But the last time I was in Manitou at your cooky jar I didn't hear anything about any Mr. Ellsworth. It was Miss Ellsworth! Who and where is the bonnie bridegroom?"

Aunt Susanne choked and stammered. Kitty pulled Peter's sleeve.

"Hush," she cautioned. "We don't talk about him. He's dead. Aunt Susanne is a widow."

"She is!" Peter was incredulous. "She wasn't a widow last summer when I was in Manitou. She wasn't even a wife. She was a bachelor girl." And he smiled at Aunt Susanne, who looked as if she wanted to run upstairs and hide in the back of her

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closet. "But never mind about that. The question before the house is are you going to dance with me now? She can, can't she, Mrs.——" he hesitated the fraction of a second, "Ellsworth?"

Aunt Susanne nodded feebly. Uncle Albert would have objected if he had not been so busy staring at Aunt Susanne.

"What did he mean, Sue?" he asked curiously. "What did your Simmons mean?"

But Aunt Susanne had pulled herself together, and she even managed to laugh carelessly. "Nothing but nonsense, Albert. Just nonsense!"

Uncle Albert would have asked more about the nonsense, but a group of disobedient guests were waiting to be welcomed and he had to mentally pigeonhole the question and tell them he was glad to see them, even if they were over an hour late.

With a masterful manner Peter led Kitty to the gallery.

"God bless old Mr. Galusha!" he said as he slipped his arm around her waist. "I say what a gorgeous place this is for a trot! Makes a fellow feel as if he were dancing in a chapel, you know. But that isn't a fox trot!" He stopped with a frown as he heard the music. "That isn't a fox trot!"

Kitty laughed. Really, young Peter Simmons was fun. "No, it isn't, and I doubt if you hear a fox trot to-night. Uncle Albert prefers the old dances, the ones your grandmother danced when she was young. There is nothing modern about my Uncle Albert!" And she sighed because her Uncle Albert was altogether old-fashioned.

"Except his grandniece," suggested Peter, as he swung her into the old-fashioned music. "You know

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I've been crazy to meet you ever since I saw you last fall. Remember?"

"Saw me?" Kitty looked up and there was a question in her dancing eyes as well as on her red lips. It was so interesting to have a man remember you for eight months. "Where?"

But Arthur cut in regardless of the neat, monogrammed dance cards, each with a tiny pencil tied to it by a pink cord, which Hoskins had distributed, and Peter had to relinquish her. Kitty turned furiously to Arthur.

"I do wish, Arthur Parkyn, that you would give me a chance to talk to some one else!" she exclaimed very unreasonably, for Arthur had not been near her before all evening. "Mr. Simmons and I were having a most interesting discussion."

"Sorry. Politics, I suppose!" Arthur eyed her oddly. Sybil did not turn a furious face to him when he cut in on her dances. Sybil smiled at him and looked as if he were bringing her a large portion of fresh lobster salad. He rather thought that he would not cut in on Kitty again if that was the way she greeted him. "Sorry," he said stiffly. "Perhaps you and I could have a little interesting conversation," he suggested even more stiffly.

But she only smiled absently and wondered where young Peter Simmons could have seen her to remember her for eight months, and she had no conversation with Arthur at all. In a very few moments Peter had tapped Arthur on the shoulder and drawn Kitty from him.

"Back to the old home," he said gayly. "Run along, Parkyn. We don't need you any longer. As I was saying, Miss Forsythe," he picked up the conversation up

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just where Arthur had caused him to drop it, "I've wanted to know you ever since I saw you last fall."

Kitty smiled up at him. Evidently she saved her furious face for Arthur Parkyn. "Where?" she asked again, and she clung to him as if she would not let any one cut in until that question at least had been answered.

"In the office, Peter Simmons and Company, Construction Engineers. You came in with a petition, and I gave you ten dollars."

"You did!" If Peter had given her a million Kitty could not have expressed more admiration or more enthusiasm.

"I did! And I gave it to you, not to your cause, fresh spinach for babies or votes for women or whatever it was. And you don't remember me? I wasted my money, ten good iron men out of my weekly stipend. They left a big hole, almost nothing but hole," he added pathetically.

"That was good of you. I like generosity in men."

"Do you like that sort of thing, carrying around petitions, I mean?" inquired Peter cautiously.

"Some one has to do it."

"And the pretty young girls get more than the plain old ladies. Sure, I understand." Peter looked as wise as Solomon. "When are you coming again? I've been saving my pennies for you. I have them in an iron bank like a bull dog."

"Not for a long, long time. You know I had to give up all that sort of thing when I came here to stay with Uncle Albert for a year. Uncle Albert doesn't believe that girls should do public work," she explained with scorn for Uncle Albert's belief.

"God bless Uncle Albert!" exclaimed Peter again.

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Kitty almost lost the step as she looked at him suspiciously. "Don't tell me that you are one of the remnants from the dark ages, that you believe that a girl should stay in an old home?"

"Remnant!" Peter made a brave attempt to look indignant but could only manage to look amused. "You wrong me, woman. I believe that a girl should have any kind of a life she wants. Is that broad enough to convince you that I am a whole piece. Remnant, indeed! Here is that hound, Andy Macnamara, the breakfast food lizard, bearing down upon us. Shall we slip through this little door and run away from him? And if we do where shall we find ourselves?"

"In a hall, a back hall!" Kitty was laughing merrily. Really, young Peter Simmons was more fun than any man she had met for a long time. She went further and decided that young Peter Simmons was more fun than any man she had ever met. He was so—so— But young Peter did not give her any time in which to analyze him.

"A back hall brings one to the kitchen, and I discover that I am hungry. Shall we raid Uncle Albert's ice box?" He swung her through the doorway safe from Andy Macnamara, and into the dimly lighted hall. "Safe from the oatmeal king!" he exclaimed as if they had had a hair-breadth escape. "Now where can we have a real argument about this sheltered life proposition? Here's a nice little museum we can have to ourselves." And he peered into the Indian room. "Uncle Albert has the accumulating instinct strong, hasn't he? I'll have to come often and stay late if I see all of his curios. Can you show them to me?"

"Where is Kitty?" questioned Sybil as Arthur cut in on her dance.

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"I don't know," he said shortly, and his tone said he didn't care. His arm tightened around her slim little body.

She sighed happily and half closed her eyes. "Oh, Arthur," she murmured. "I could die dancing with you! Don't let us ever stop!"

The hurt look slipped from Arthur's eyes. Sybil appreciated him if Kitty didn't. Sybil was a good little girl, and she certainly did appreciate him. A man could be a fool to take a cold snub when he could get warm appreciation.

"Where is Kitty?" asked Uncle Albert when he had rolled around the gallery without finding his eldest grandniece. Uncle Albert watched the dancers curiously. The polka must have changed since he was a dancing man, but even in his young days there had been more than one kind of a polka. Uncle Albert never suspected that his guests were flagrantly disobeying his dance card and dancing a fox trot when the dance card told them plainly that they must dance a polka.

Aunt Susanne looked up from the secluded corner of the library where she had hidden herself and shook her head. She had no idea where Kitty was.

"I don't like this running away from the guests!" murmured Uncle Albert. "Why can't they stay together? Did you see young Peter Simmons, Sue? Isn't he a fine young fellow? As soon as he came in the door I knew he was the very man for Kitty. You met him, didn't you?"

"Yes, I met him!" Aunt Susanne made a trap of her mouth again. "I knew him in Manitou, before," she hesitated before she blurted out, "I was married!"

"Young Peter knew your husband, did he?" Uncle

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Albert was interested to hear that. It made Sue's wedding more real to hear that young Peter Simmons had known her husband.

Aunt Susanne gulped. "No," she said hurriedly. "He never knew James."

"James?" Uncle Albert raised an inquiring eyebrow. "I thought you said his name was Robert?"

"James Robert," Aunt Susanne murmured faintly. "Sometimes I called him James and sometimes Robert."

"H-m," snorted Uncle Albert. "Wasn't that confusing? I don't understand your marriage, Sue. You are so odd and uncommunicative that you make me think there was something queer about it."

Aunt Susanne shrank away from him and her pleasant rosy face took on a pasty, unpleasant color. "Why, Albert Galusha!" she exclaimed and her voice would have been very indignant if it had not trembled pitifully. "I—I——" She rose suddenly and went away from him as fast as her shaking limbs would take her.

Uncle Albert looked after her in surprise, and he sighed. "Now I suppose I've hurt her feelings. Lord, how queer you made women! All the same I bet there was something queer about Sue's wedding." And he sighed again. He hated to think there was anything odd in his family. He liked his family to be like other families.

But as he was the host he could not ponder over the queerness of Sue's wedding. He had to see that his guests, all of them, not one or two, had a good time. He was disappointed that the young people had not obeyed his monogrammed dance cards, but he could see that they hadn't as he stood in the doorway and

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atched the men cut in. He supposed that they didn't understand the dance cards, and he was sorry that he had not explained them as he had intended until Sybil shrieked and exclaimed: "Uncle Albert, you can't!" but he could have explained them very easily.

The gallery really made a charming place for a dance, the long polished floor, the brilliant color in the pictures which was repeated in the gowns of the girls. How well the pictures looked! how brilliant! His eyes followed the pictures until they came to one which was not brilliant, indeed it looked like a hole in the wall, and he turned from it impatiently.

It was pleasant to have a little gayety in the gallery, he decided. There was Vernon talking to young Mrs. Richard Cabot. Uncle Albert had noticed that Vernon always talked to the young matrons. He supposed that was Vernon's artistic temperament. And there was Bert,—for Uncle Albert had made a point of Bert's presence at his party and insisted on proper garments, also; he did not care if Bert did emphasize class distinction,—exchanging anecdotes of the twins with Mrs. Joshua Cabot, who had a pair of her own. Uncle Albert wondered fretfully if Sybil had been dancing with young Parkyn all evening. He had not seen her dance with any other man. And where was Kitty? Perhaps Sue had gone to look for her. Kitty and young Simmons were both missing. He smiled when he discovered that two of his guests were missing, and then he scowled. Kitty should not slip away to talk even with young Simmons when she was a laughter of the house and had some social responsibility.

At that very moment Peter was laughing with Kitty. "My old grandmother told me to raise the dickens at



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this party of your Uncle Albert's," he said. "And I forgot all about it."

"Is it too late?" questioned Kitty.

"It is never too late," Peter told her wisely. "That should have been one of the first things politics taught you."

At twelve o'clock, so well had Uncle Albert planned, his guests had been suppered, and the musicians were playing "Home, Sweet Home," which had been the last dance at every party Uncle Albert attended in the days when he went to dances. But these young people waltzed to "Home, Sweet Home," and then demanded another—polka. Not one of them went up to Uncle Albert to say good-night and tell him what a splendid party he had had. Uncle Albert had to stand there, in his own gallery, and watch these irresponsible young people tear his well-made plans to ribbons. Of course he could have ordered the musicians to stop playing, but he was too dazed to think of that at first, and then he thought grimly that he would see how far the young rebels would go. It was actually after two o'clock when the dancers slipped away, and Uncle Albert and Aunt Susanne were left alone in the gallery.

"Well," Uncle Albert spoke a bit dubiously as if he were not quite sure, "I think it went off very well, although they didn't go home when I told them to. Where are Kitty and Sybil? They wouldn't go to bed without saying good-night to us, would they? And Vern? Where do you suppose they all are?" Followed by Aunt Susanne he went into the hall just in time to see Kitty and Sybil steal down the stairs. They wore their evening coats over their dancing frocks and looked as if they were two of the guests on their way home.

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"Girls!" exclaimed astonished Uncle Albert, blinking hard to make sure that his old eyes were not deceiving him. "Where are you going?"

Sybil stamped her foot and muttered something, but Kitty ran up to Uncle Albert and told him.

"We are going for a little ride, Uncle Albert. It's such a peach of a night, and we couldn't go to sleep if we did go to bed. We're going for a spin in the moonlight." And she waved her hand and would have run away if he had not caught her rose velvet sleeve.

"Spin in the moonlight!" Uncle Albert sputtered like a soda water bottle. "You shan't go!"

"Oh, Uncle Albert!" Kitty slipped a coaxing hand under his arm. "Why not? It's such a perfectly gorgeous night. Why, at Abercrombies' the other night we all went for a corking ride before we came home. It was thrilling! Yes, we did!" as Uncle Albert sputtered again. "It was gorgeous!"

"Yes, we did!" nodded Sybil, as Uncle Albert seemed incapable of speech. "Muriel Abercrombie and everyone. It was fun! Your party was very pleasant, Uncle Albert," she was polite enough to say, "but it was a teeny bit poky. It didn't have any snap to it. I didn't mind, for I was dancing with Arthur. But now we are going to run out to Bluebell Farm for something to eat."

"Eat!" Uncle Albert could not believe his two big ears. "Haven't you had enough to eat?" His hospitality was outraged. Why, he had ordered a wonderful supper, pâtés and salad and many kinds of sandwiches and little cakes and ice cream and salted nuts and candies, just the things young people like, and now Sybil wanted to go somewhere to eat. He felt

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that he needed reinforcements. "Sue!" he stammered chokingly. "Sue! You shan't go anywhere but bed!" he told Kitty and Sybil autocratically. "Sue, come and tell them if they want to go somewhere they can go to bed! It's outrageous!"

"All ready?" Young Peter Simmons and Arthur Parkyn came in with a clatter. "What's holding up the traffic?" asked young Peter quickly.

"It's Uncle Albert," began Kitty. "He doesn't want us to go!"

"Not go!" Peter looked at Uncle Albert. "Of course we are going! Muriel Abercrombie and Andy and the rest have gone. Oh, come now, Mr. Galusha, you don't want to spoil a good time, do you? Come on with us and see how harmless we are. Sausage and hot cakes taste awful good at three o'clock in the morning. Come with us, you and," he looked at Aunt Susanne and winked, "Mrs. Ellsworth."

"Oh!" Aunt Susanne would have turned and fled, but the laughing, chattering group gathered around her and around Uncle Albert, and before they knew it Uncle Albert and Aunt Susanne were in the tonneau of Peter Simmons' big touring car.

## XVIII

UNCLE ALBERT had not been on a joy ride for over years, and he had no desire to go on another joy ride no matter how many more years he lived. But he seemed to have no choice. To be sure he could have called to Bert and Hoskins for help, or to the policeman who loitered curiously on his round, but he never opened his mouth until he was in the car with Aunt Susanne and Sybil.

"This is an outrage!" he mumbled then.

"Isn't it awful!" agreed Aunt Susanne, but her eyes gleamed and her face held more eager expectation than horror. "There isn't any limit to what these wicked people will do, is there, Albert?"

Sybil bent forward to peer into Uncle Albert's grimacing face, as he grunted rudely instead of politely answering Aunt Susanne's question.

"You look as if you were going to be hanged!" she cried. "Cheer up, Uncle Albert! It isn't as bad as that!"

Ernest and Arthur had taken the little seats in the back, and Peter Simmons had made sure that Kitty would be beside him by putting her next to the wheel. As he jumped in and did something which made the eight horses harnessed under the hood rear and snort. A second more and they shot up the street. "We'll be killed!" moaned Uncle Albert, who never permitted his chauffeur to drive faster than twenty miles an hour and that only on a straight and clear

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"I wonder if we will?" murmured Aunt Susanne. "But you must admit, Albert, that it is very pleasant riding so fast. It feels like flying!"

On the front seat Peter smiled at the big-eyed, pink-cheeked girl beside him. "Happy?" he asked gently.

"Absolutely!" she told him enthusiastically, but even if she was absolutely happy she moved restlessly and shot an impatient glance over her shoulder as she heard Vernon explain to Uncle Albert that it really was less dangerous to drive at fifty miles an hour than at twenty. "Everybody goes slow," he grinned, "so that the twenty-mile an hour traffic is awfully congested, but there is plenty of room for the fifty-an-hour driver." "I wish they wouldn't talk," Kitty murmured rebelliously. "It is so heavenly just to dash through this silver-plated world that I don't see why they can't keep still and enjoy it. It is so heavenly!"

"It is," agreed Peter fervently, and he let the car out another bit until Uncle Albert groaned and even Aunt Susanne gave a little shriek.

In deference to the groan and the shriek Peter obligingly slowed down to a creeping forty miles an hour. "We want to please the aged," he whispered to Kitty. "And any way it will take longer to go slow. I don't want to cut down a single minute I can be with you—not a single second!"

The exquisite color in Kitty's cheeks deepened. "Neither do I," she heard her lips say impulsively, and she added in quick confusion: "Of course there is no sense in scaring Uncle Albert to death! But I do wish they wouldn't talk!"

She had her wish, for Uncle Albert's protest and Aunt Susanne's shriek died with the slackening of speed, and the low chatter which Sybil and Arthur

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carried on about nothing never reached Kitty's ears. Kitty looked up at the big round moon with a feeling of rare content. She was sure that it had never been so large nor so bright. She opened her lips to call Peter's attention to the unusual size and brightness, but Peter spoke first.

"Ever see such a night?" he asked eagerly. "I never did!" And he took his eyes from the road to smile at her in a way which made her heart beat faster. Really there was something very disturbing about this young Peter Simmons, who had kept his promise to his grandmother and raised the dickens at Uncle Albert's party by running away with Uncle Albert. She laughed softly as she thought of poor Uncle Albert in the tonneau between Aunt Susanne and Sybil. Poor old Uncle Albert! Kitty felt very, very sorry for him because he was not a girl and young and sitting beside Peter Simmons as they flew along in the moonlight.

"What's the joke?" demanded Peter instantly. "No fair to laugh by yourself. That's greedy!"

But Kitty only laughed again and told him that he was a goose. And Peter laughed and told her that she was a dear. And then they both laughed with a foolish enjoyment which no goose and no deer could have shown.

Mile after mile of shining silver road slipped behind them. Uncle Albert began to think that they would never, never stop. Scraps of song and laughter came to him on the soft night wind, so he knew that they did not have the road to themselves, but all the same he thought they had gone far enough. He was just on the point of telling Peter that in his judgment it was time to turn around and go home, when Peter swung

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the car to the left into a lane, at the end of which Uncle Albert saw many twinkling lights.

"What is this place?" he demanded in his most autocratic manner.

"It's Bluebell Farm," giggled Sybil.

"Run by a young couple who want to make a big clean-up quick." Arthur was kind enough to explain Bluebell Farm to Uncle Albert. "It is their proud boast that they will give you food at any hour, day or night. Mrs. Nelson runs the place during the day and Nelson takes it on at night. They opened it last month, and it's been going strong ever since. There has been a big crowd every time I've been here."

"And the best eats!" promised Sybil. "You are in luck, Uncle Albert, to be invited!"

Uncle Albert grunted derisively. Lucky to be dragged out here, miles and miles from his old mahogany bed! He did not see it that way, and so he grunted, but he looked at the cars parked in the lane—there must have been a baker's dozen of them—and at the brightly lighted farmhouse which seemed to call hospitably, "Come in! Come in!" from every twinkling window.

"Some nights," Arthur went on as though determined to make Uncle Albert appreciate his luck, "there is such a string of cars that there isn't room in the house, and Nelson brings out trays and you eat your fried chicken in the car. Nelson's fearfully ambitious, and he never lets any one get away without being fed."

Peter had brought the car to a stop. "Well," he said genially, "here we are!"

Uncle Albert was the last to leave the car, and he

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did not put one of his feet on the ground until he had asked a question, "Is this a respectable place?" he demanded thickly.

"Why, Uncle Albert!" Kitty and Sybil stared at him. As if they would have allowed any one to bring him to a place which was not respectable!

Uncle Albert turned away from them impatiently. What would two silly girls know, especially when one silly girl was a politician and the other silly girl painted lamp shades? Kitty looked apologetically at Peter. She did hope that Uncle Albert's ridiculous question would not offend him.

Peter was not a bit offended; indeed, he laughed as if he were amused. "Well," he said to Uncle Albert quickly, "I brought my old Granny out here the other night. Perhaps it was a little earlier than this, but it was after midnight. We came out at a great clip, and Granny thought it was some place. She declared she would bring grandfather as soon as he came home."

"She did!" If old Mrs. Peter Simmons planned to bring her husband to Bluebell Farm it must be respectable enough for old Mr. Galusha, and Uncle Albert deigned to step from the car. He did not want a tray brought to him.

Aunt Susanne had slipped out as soon as Peter had stopped and was looking about her with curious, eager eyes. "Is this a road house?" she asked. "I've read a lot in the papers about road houses, but I never was at one."

"You may call this a road house if you wish," Vernon told her as he slipped a hand under her arm. "Names mean nothing."

"Oh, but they do," insisted Aunt Susanne. "They



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mean everything. Albert," she turned to reluctant Uncle Albert, "this makes me think of the farmhouse where we used to drive for an oyster stew. Do you remember?"

Uncle Albert refused to remember and insisted that it was all nonsense. Another car had driven up, and Muriel Abercrombie and Andy Macnamara and his sister Corice and Bertram Wadsley got out of it and joined them, and they went into the farmhouse, a laughing, chattering group, in which Uncle Albert and Aunt Susanne seemed out of place.

Peter had telephoned and a room had been reserved for him, a big room which had little in it but a long table covered with white oilcloth and set with thick white dishes and worn knives and forks. The two windows were wide open and looked out on the moon-flooded meadow. There was much confusion and chatter before every one was seated. Uncle Albert was hustled and jostled before he found himself between Kitty and her pattern, Muriel Abercrombie. On the other side of Kitty was Peter Simmons, and directly across from Uncle Albert was Aunt Susanne, more interested than any girl around the table.

As soon as they were seated the door was pushed open, and two men began bringing in great platters of scrambled eggs and bacon and hot buttered toast in thick slices and pots of coffee. Uncle Albert had never eaten scrambled eggs and bacon at three o'clock in the morning and he wondered if he could do it now, but he found he could do it quite easily. Although he had nibbled at his own supper which had been perfectly served on fine Lenox china and shining silver at eleven o'clock he discovered that he was hungry, and he ate with a relish everything but the hot cakes which

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Nelson brought in. Uncle Albert was too afraid of those hot cakes to taste them.

"Isn't it amazing how hungry you always are!" exclaimed Kitty, letting Peter serve her another piping hot cake to be eaten with heaps of butter and crumbled maple sugar. "And everything tastes so heavenly good! Aunt Susanne," she peeped across the table, "how do you like it?"

"These are very excellent cakes," Aunt Susanne smiled, although she had scarcely tasted her cake. Aunt Susanne was not hungry, perhaps she was more excited than the young people who found no novelty in an early breakfast at Bluebell Farm, or than Uncle Albert, who looked like nothing but a protest as he sat between Kitty and Muriel. Aunt Susanne did not care to eat; she was quite content to sit at the table and watch the others and listen to the careless talk and laughter.

"Father will never say a word when I tell him you were here with us to-night, Mr. Galusha." Muriel Abercrombie turned her impish painted face to Uncle Albert. "He never will believe me when I tell him."

A slight chill ran over Uncle Albert as he heard that the Mifflin National Bank, conservative John Abercrombie, was to be told that he had gone to Bluebell Farm for breakfast, and then he remembered that the Peter Simmons Construction Company, in the person of old Peter Simmons himself, was to be brought to the farm by Mrs. Peter Simmons, and he managed to grunt that Muriel had better bring her father with her the next time she came. Muriel gave a little shriek.

"Imagine father, my father, here!" she cried, but

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no one could imagine staid Mr. Abercrombie at Bluebell Farm eating hot cakes smothered in butter and crumbled maple sugar.

Uncle Albert looked at her with poorly concealed disgust as she took a cigarette from Bertram Wadsley, and he moved away as far as he could when she blew a little cloud of smoke almost into his face. This was the girl he had given Kitty as a pattern. Noisy, pert, ill-bred, he decided. But how could he have known that she would be noisy, pert and ill-bred? Her father was a gentleman of the old school and her mother, he mentally viewed gentle, quiet Mrs. Abercrombie. How on earth had they allowed their daughter to become so noisy and pert and ill-bred? When he was young—— He sighed for it was so very long ago that he had been young. How different everything was now! And how disagreeable and common the difference was!

Peter pushed back his chair. "Now, then, boys and girls," he grinned, "if we don't want to see the sun rise we had better be on our way."

There was another rush and bustle, and then Muriel Abercrombie gave a shriek. "My pearls! What has become of my pearls?"

They all turned to look at her white neck which the pearls had encircled, but there were no pearls around it now.

"I had them when I came in! I know I did!" wailed Muriel. "What can have become of them?"

"The clasp must have come unfastened!" Kitty stooped to look on the floor beside Muriel's place.

They all looked, pushing back chairs and the table, but no one could find a trace of the pearls. The laughing faces sobered.

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"You are sure you had them when you came?" asked Kitty.

"Absolutely!" Muriel was almost in tears. "The clasp caught on the collar when I took off my coat. What will dad say? He gave them to me when I left school. I've got to find them! None of you took them for a joke, did you?" She looked at them suspiciously, eagerly, as if she hoped that one of them had played a joke on her.

Andy Macnamara laughed oddly. "I, for one, haven't played a joker," he said. "You can see what I have in my pockets." And he gravely turned his pockets inside out.

Peter and Vernon and Arthur followed his example and turned their pockets inside out, but there was nothing in their pockets which did not belong in them. Uncle Albert's brain whirled as he watched them. What did they mean? Surely they were not insinuating——

"How about your pockets, Uncle Albert?" asked Vernon, moving toward him.

Involuntarily Uncle Albert stepped away, and he frowned. The idea! He was furious. He would not have his pockets searched. He would not! But Vernon slipped his fingers into the left waistcoat pocket and brought out a small piece of toast. Uncle Albert looked at it in surprise and disgust. Bits of toast had been thrown about the table, but how had a piece slipped into his pocket? And then Vernon put his hand into Uncle Albert's right waistcoat pocket and produced a string of pearls. There was a strange silence. Uncle Albert's mouth opened and his jaw dropped. The flush in his face which had been a delicate mauve became an angry purple. Before he

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could sputter a word Muriel gave another little shriek.

"I remember now!" she cried. "When the clasp caught on my collar I was afraid the pearls would drop off, and I stuffed them into somebody's pocket. I didn't have a pocket of my own. It must have been yours, Mr. Galusha! What a scream!" She laughed loudly as she held the pearls tight in her hand. "Funny that I forgot, but I was so frightened when I missed them that my poor old brain was paralyzed. I never saw anything so funny in my life as Mr. Galusha's face when Mr. Maughan pulled them out of his pocket. It was a perfect scream!" And she laughed louder.

Uncle Albert stared at her, and thought that he had never seen a girl he disliked as he disliked Muriel Abercrombie. Noisy, pert, ill-bred! He didn't care if she was the daughter of the National Bank and the Colonial Dames. She was rude and ill-bred. He would not let Kitty have such a shocking example. He should hate to have Kitty copy Muriel in any way. The idea of a silly chit stuffing pearls worth—he remembered that John Abercrombie had told him what he had paid for Muriel's pearls—five thousand dollars in the pocket of any man and then forgetting where she had put them. Old John Abercrombie would never forget where he put any five thousand dollars. Reckless, extravagant and foolish were a few more adjectives which he added to those he had already given Muriel, and he snorted at her contemptuously as he turned his back to her. Kitty had slipped her hand in his, and she squeezed it hard as they went to the car.

"I don't want you to copy her, Kitty," he whispered thickly. "I don't want you to copy her at all."

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"I shan't, Uncle Albert!" Kitty squeezed his hand harder. "I think she's perfectly hateful."

Sybil giggled when she was in the tonneau again beside Uncle Albert and Aunt Susanne. "Wasn't it funny, Uncle Albert!" she cried, "for Muriel to use you as a jewel box and forget about you?"

Uncle Albert snorted at her and thought how different she was from Kitty. "Funny?" he rumbled indignantly. "It was criminal!"

He never said another word all the long way home. Neither did any one else. In a silence which was full of happy thrills to some of the young people, and which held gloomy forebodings for at least one of the older people, they followed the white road back to town. Aunt Susanne went to sleep with her head on Uncle Albert's shoulder and never wakened until they stopped before the house. The night watchman was passing and he stopped to stare. Never so long as he had been on that beat had he seen old Mr. Galusha enter his house at sunrise.

Uncle Albert blushed to be caught by the night watchman, and he would have hurried into the house if Peter had not stopped him.

"I'm mighty sorry Muriel Abercrombie was such an idiot, Mr. Galusha," he said, and his voice sounded as if he really were sorry. "You would have had a good time if it hadn't been for Muriel, wouldn't you?"

Uncle Albert was tempted to refuse to see the outstretched hand and to declare that the whole affair had been an outrage, and he gave himself a huge surprise when he chuckled grimly, "It wasn't as bad as I feared it would be," he admitted reluctantly.

"Bad!" exclaimed Aunt Susanne, who was awake now and blinking rapidly. "I don't see why people find

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fault with joy rides. I think they are very pleasant. Good-night, Mr. Simmons, or is it good-morning?"

"Morning, I should say. Well, if I am going to have any sleep at all I had better run along."

"Good-by!" chorused Uncle Albert and his family.

When Peter heard the chorus he did not get into his car and dash away, he stepped closer to Kitty Forsythe.

"Aren't you going to ask me to come and see you soon?" he asked quickly. "Aren't any of you going to ask me to come and see you? Here I've given you a corking drive and a good breakfast and all you say is good-night. I don't think that is very cordial!"

"Why, of course," stammered Kitty, while Sybil and Arthur and even Uncle Albert stopped to listen. "Do come and see us very soon!"

"I'll come to-night," promised Peter, waving his hand toward the sky where a rosy flush told them that to-day was already here. "Thank you, Miss Forsythe, I'll be glad to come. Now then, Parkyn, if you are coming with me, we'll be on our way."

"You come to-night, too, Arthur," called Sybil. "You come with Mr. Simmons!"

Uncle Albert felt very old and very stiff as he went up the steps. He was out late so seldom that he did not carry a latchkey, and he grumbled.

"What will Hoskins say?" He thought that he would die of shame to have Hoskins see him coming home from a joy ride at sunrise.

"What do we care for Hoskins? If he gets impudent you can fire him," laughed Vernon. "But luckily I have a key. If you are very careful Hoskins need never know how disgracefully you behave."

## XIX

WHEN young Peter Simmons came down that morning looking as fresh as if he had not spent nine-tenths of the night in the pursuit of pleasure, he found his grandmother still at the table in the sunny breakfast room. She put down the morning paper as he came in.

"Well, Peter," she said cheerily, "I am glad you came home for breakfast. I hate eating alone!" And then she remembered where he had been and she asked eagerly: "Did you play the dickens at old Albert Galusha's sample party?"

As he bent to kiss her cheek which was like old ivory, Peter laughed, for there was a rare understanding between him and his grandmother. Old Mrs. Simmons had always insisted that she understood her grandson far better than his mother did or could.

"Well," he said, as he took the place across from her, "I took old Mr. Galusha on a joy ride and gave him an early breakfast at Bluebell Farm."

She raised her delicate eyebrows. "Peter, you didn't? You never did?" But when Peter insisted that he had, she laughed softly. "I hope you didn't take him alone!"

"No!" Peter flushed as he remembered who had sat on the front seat beside him as he had driven old Mr. Galusha on his joy ride. "No, I didn't take him alone." He was silent for a moment, before he jumped up and went to put his hand on his grandmother's fingers as they rested on the table. His voice



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was very different, very deep and sober, as he said gently: "Granny, I've found her! I've found my girl!"

"Peter!" She looked up all eager astonishment and quick curiosity, for she had been anxious for Peter to find his girl. "Who is she? Do I know her?"

"She is one of old Mr. Galusha's made-to-order family, Kitty Forsythe! She's—she's——" Peter drew a long breath and looked helplessly at his grandmother. He found it was impossible to tell her what Kitty was. "She's a darling! The moment I saw her I knew she was the girl for me. Why, my old heart just jumped up and shouted: 'Here she is, Peter Simmons! Here she is!' When I took her hand as she stood beside her old uncle and told her I was glad to meet her, the world was all ablaze with bright lights and full of soft music. I never felt anything like it!" And he drew another deep breath and looked at his grandmother, as if for an explanation of the strange feeling which had gripped him when he saw Kitty at Uncle Albert's sample party.

"Peter!" That was all Granny could say, and she had difficulty in saying even that much.

"I've got to have her, Granny," frowned Peter, and he pulled a chair up so that he could sit beside her instead of across the table from her. "I've just got to have her!"

"Peter!" exclaimed Granny again. "But how about that buxom Indian lass, Mary Fat Goose?" she questioned to lighten the tension which was almost unbearable. It made her want to cry and laugh and put her old arms around Peter and tell him that he should have anything in the world he wanted, everything in the world!

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Peter laughed scornfully. "Mary Fat Goose!" he exclaimed. "Granny, you foolish old thing! Didn't I tell you that Kitty Forsythe was my girl? I like her to have your name," he added, for Granny was Kitty, too, although no one but old Peter Simmons remembered that she was.

"Dear boy!" Granny patted his lean, brown hand. "But I thought Kitty Forsythe was engaged to Arthur Parkyn," she ventured.

Peter looked up quickly when he heard that Kitty was engaged, but he laughed scornfully again when he heard to whom she was engaged.

"Parkyn? Not on your life! Kitty Forsythe's never engaged to any Arthur Parkyn! Why, she scarcely saw him all night. And he isn't the man for her at all!"

"Oh, isn't he?" smiled Granny. "Who is?"

"I am!" Peter drew himself up proudly. "And I've got to show her that I am! You must help me, Granny dear! You know I only have a month before I have to be back in Montana. How can I make her see that I'm the only man in the world who will make her happy when I have only thirty days?"

"You are sure, aren't you, Peter?" questioned Granny, although she knew he was. And Peter could make any girl happy. She thought Kitty Forsythe was very, very lucky to be the girl to fill the world with bright lights and sweet music for Peter.

"Absolutely sure!" Peter had never a doubt. "Oh, Granny, she is a darling! I wish you knew her!"

"I do know her. We worked together in the League of Women Voters. I thought she was a very nice, clever girl."

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"Nice! Clever!" groaned Peter, indignant at the adjectives Granny had chosen to describe his girl.

"Yes!" Granny refused to change them, although Peter's groan told her that they were anything but satisfactory. "Nice and clever," she repeated with a toss of her gray head. "And you'll find that a nice, clever girl will be very helpful, Peter, my son, when you have her out in the wilds of Montana."

Peter put his arm around her and hugged her. "You think I'll have her in Montana with me?" he asked so eagerly that his voice shook.

"I don't see how she ever could resist you! I couldn't, but of course I'm only a doting old grandmother, and she is a modern girl. A very modern girl," she reminded Peter, but Peter did not care a button how modern Kitty was.

"I know," was all he said. "All girls are modern. They wouldn't be girls if they were anything else. And the modern girl is the best kind of a girl for the modern man."

"Do eat your breakfast, Peter, and tell me how I can help you. Dear, dear, I've never denied you anything in your life, so why should I begin by trying to take your girl from you? Of course I'll help you! And a month is a long while, Peter. You have heaps of time!"

"Can't afford to waste a minute!" insisted Peter. "Not a second! You must help me at once, Granny!"

That was why Kitty went to dine with Granny Simmons that very evening. Granny had smiled and then the tears had slipped into her old eyes, for she distinctly caught a tremble in Kitty's voice when Kitty accepted her telephoned invitation.

"Mr. Simmons will be home for a wonder, and I

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want you to meet Peter's grandfather," went on Granny, without ever explaining why she was so anxious for Kitty to meet old Peter Simmons. "Young Peter is only home for a month, you know," she told Kitty, "and we must make the most of every day."

"A month!" Peter had never told Kitty that his time was limited, and a month— Why, although this month was May and as usual would have thirty-one days in it, a month sounded like no time at all to Kitty.

"Shall I ask your cousin to come with you?" went on Granny pleasantly. "Or shall we have just a little party of four?"

"Sybil has an engagement!" exclaimed Kitty quickly. "She couldn't come, Mrs. Simmons!"

"I don't see how you can go, Kitty," Sybil grumbled when Kitty told her of the invitation she had received and accepted. "Arthur said he was coming up to-night."

"Arthur!" Kitty had forgotten that there was such a man in the world as Arthur Parkyn.

"Arthur is worth a hundred of that big, overbearing Peter Simmons you were so crazy about last night!" Sybil exclaimed indignantly. "I think it's horrid of you to treat Arthur as you do, when he worships the ground you walk on!" She watched Kitty anxiously, and waited for Kitty to tell her that Arthur Parkyn did not worship her at all, that Sybil was talking utter nonsense.

But Kitty only frowned. "Bother Arthur Parkyn!" she said impatiently, for she did not want to think of Arthur Parkyn. Her mind was too full of big, overbearing Peter Simmons to leave any room at all for Arthur Parkyn.

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Sybil smiled in a very superior manner. "You think you are so clever, Kitty Forsythe, so high-brow with your politics and your school for voters and all your progressive ideas, but now I see that you are just like other girls. But you needn't blame me if you lose Arthur Parkyn. You can't say I didn't warn you. Oh, Kitty!" her face flushed, "he is so splendid!"

"He is!" agreed Kitty, and her face flushed, too.

Sybil looked up quickly, and she frowned as if she did not like Kitty's eagerness. "If you think he is so splendid why are you going away when he is coming here?" she asked sharply.

"Who is coming here?"

Sybil stamped her foot. "Arthur Parkyn! I've told you a million times!" Really, Kitty was stupid.

"Oh, Arthur Parkyn!" And Kitty shrugged her shoulders. Arthur Parkyn was nothing to her now. She had known that for over twenty-four hours.

"Kitty!" Sybil caught her shoulder and pulled her around so that Kitty would have to look at her. "Isn't it hateful that we can't either of us be married before next February?"

"Why can't we?" Really, Kitty was too stupid.

"Because we are under contract to stay with old Uncle Albert until February!" mourned Sybil. "You can't have forgotten that! We can't either of us be married until next year, you know. But, Kitty," her face which had been as mournful as a yard of black crêpe looked like thirty-six inches of red georgette, as she clutched Kitty tighter, "do you think Uncle Albert would take back his money if we were engaged?"

## XX

GRANNY SIMMONS planned to help her grandson with a family party, just old Peter Simmons, and young Peter Simmons and Kitty, but old Peter Simmons knocked her helpful plan into a cocked hat when he brought guests home with him. The guests were an American artist and his Italian friend. They had brought letters of introduction to old Peter Simmons, and so old Mr. Simmons brought them to meet Granny.

Peter was frankly disgusted and expressed his disapproval and disappointment to his grandmother without any reservations at all.

"Don't blame me, Peter!" Granny was as disappointed as Peter. "I didn't invite these men."

"I know. But grandfather is so thoughtless. If he wanted to entertain these people why couldn't he have taken them to the club? Then you and my girl and I could have had a jolly time here. I suppose we couldn't drive out to the Country Club and leave grandfather with his new friends?" he suggested hopefully.

His grandmother laughed. The selfishness of the younger generation which really could not have its plans interfered with amused her. Its egotism was so colossal. "No," she said firmly, "we can't! Your grandfather has some rights in this house and one of them is the privilege of bringing guests home whenever he pleases. Don't be so down-hearted, Peter. If you marry this girl one evening more or less won't make

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much difference, and if you don't marry her it will be as well for you not to see too much of her."

"If," sneered young Peter, with Disraelian contempt for that small word. "This is not a question of any old 'if,' dear lady, it is a question of when!" And he gave her a big bear hug, a black bear hug.

"I wonder," murmured Granny, but she looked at him with approving and admiring eyes, for in her old heart she did not see how any girl could resist such a wonderful man as young Peter Simmons.

If Kitty's grandmother had been in the Simmons living room that evening instead of in the Miffin cemetery, she would surely have wondered how any man could resist so wonderful a girl as her young granddaughter, for that is the way God made grandmothers. Kitty really was charming in a frock of rosy crêpe de Chine whose pretty color was reflected in her cheeks. Her eyes were like stars, and when she came in she wore a shy little manner which she had never donned before and which proved to be adorably becoming.

"You look like a rose!" exclaimed Peter, as he hurried to meet her. "The most beautiful pink rose I ever saw!"

"Do you like it?" The pink in her cheeks turned to an exquisite scarlet as she dropped her eyes, unable to meet the admiration in his eager face.

"Like it!" What a perfectly foolish question. She knew very well that he admired her in pink or in any other color. Surely he had made that very plain, printed it in large letters all over him so that "his girl" could read it as soon as she saw him.

Kitty smiled with sweet shyness, but she had nothing to say to his admiring eyes nor to his admiring voice. Peter's admiration was really rather overwhelming.

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It made Kitty feel like a little rudderless boat tossing wildly on an unknown sea. She turned with a quick breath to Granny Simmons, who was smiling at her, and who bent forward to kiss her scarlet cheek. Peter all but died of envy. For the very first time in his life he wished that he were a grandmother.

"I am very glad to see you, my dear," Granny said, and the simple, hearty greeting and the soft touch of Granny's lips on her cheek made Kitty's heart thump wildly. "How charming you are in all that soft pink, like a lovely rose!"

"That's what I said!" Peter was delighted to have his diagnosis indorsed by another opinion. "I say, Miss Forsythe, we have a big disappointment for you!" he added boyishly.

"For me?" Kitty wondered what on earth he could mean. Wasn't she to stay to dinner?

"Granny and I planned for you to dine with us and grandfather, just the four of us, a family party," he explained, and the color deepened in his own brown face. "And now grandfather has very thoughtlessly and unkindly rung in two strange men. I don't see why he couldn't take them to the club," he grumbled with his lips, but he smiled with his eyes, for he just had to smile when he looked at rosy Kitty.

Kitty laughed softly. Peter really was too ridiculous, like a great big boy. "I suppose your grandfather thinks he has some privileges in his own home," she said as Granny had said. Evidently women's minds ran in the same grooves. "You may find his two strange men exceedingly interesting," she suggested.

"That is not the question," insisted Peter. "We didn't want any crowd to-night, did we?"

"You could scarcely call two guests a crowd, could



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you, Mrs. Simmons?" Kitty kindly brought Granny into the discussion, although Granny had thoughtfully retired behind the evening paper.

Granny emerged with a smile. "There have been times in my life when one guest would have been a crowd." She stood by Peter as she had promised she would. "But Peter should remember that little boys cannot have things all their own way all of the time."

"Nor big boys, either," grinned Peter. "We'll have to have another family dinner to make up for this one which isn't going to be a family dinner," he suggested. "Shan't we?" he appealed to Kitty.

She did not answer him, for old Peter Simmons came in and had to be introduced. He held Kitty's hand in his big, firm paws and told her how glad he always was to meet young people, especially pretty young girls in pink calico. Kitty liked him at once.

"No wonder old Albert Galusha has turned over a new leaf," went on old Mr. Simmons, still holding Kitty's fingers. "It would make any man cut capers to take him from such a sandy desert as Galusha lived in and put him in a flower garden. I heard he was at Bluebell Farm at three o'clock this morning. That is something new for old Albert Galusha! Keep up the good work, my dear, and in time you may make a human being out of him. Nothing like young people around to make an old man young again. It did Albert Galusha more good to acquire a made-to-order family than it ever did to buy that last Rembrandt. By the way, my dear," he gave Kitty back her fingers and turned to Granny, "Williams and Nicola are artists, you know."

"Artists aren't in your line," young Peter told him somewhat sternly. "Why didn't you turn them over to

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Mr. Galusha? What made you bring them here to-night?"

Old Peter Simmons grunted pleasantly. "They brought letters from an old client of mine. Couldn't help it, my son. An obligation has to be met when it is presented, social or business. What difference does it make to you?" He eyed Peter quizzically. "Miss Forsythe will be interested in them. They can tell her a lot about Italy and art."

"H-m!" sniffed young Peter, and he looked at Kitty as if he expected her to say that she did not care a copper penny about Italy or art, but Kitty only smiled and wisely kept her lips closed.

And although Mr. Williams and Mr. Nicola did talk of art and of Italy in a way which would have interested any one Kitty Forsythe never heard them. She smiled pleasantly and nodded her head now and then, but she never heard what Mr. Nicola was saying, although he sat right next to her. She was too conscious of young Peter Simmons who was across the table and who was making her feel as no man had ever made her feel, not in all of her life. She came to the surface with a little gasp when Mr. Nicola asked her a direct question about Uncle Albert's gallery, for she had to confess with shame and a very charming flush that she knew very little about Uncle Albert's collection.

"I have never been much interested in that sort of thing," she frankly admitted, and young Peter nodded approval. He would never expect a girl to be interested in old pictures, not a real live girl in a real live world.

"Indeed!" murmured Mr. Nicola politely.

Kitty looked at him quickly. Now that she heard

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his voice she found a familiar note in it. His face was familiar, also. Where had she seen him before? The familiarity teased her.

"You will wish to see Mr. Galusha's gallery," old Peter Simmons said with pleasant hospitality. "We might run over after dinner. Will your uncle be home this evening, Miss Forsythe?"

"Of course!" Kitty spoke as though Uncle Albert never left his home after dark. "He will like to show you his pictures. He's quite crazy about them!"

And so after dinner they all motored over to Uncle Albert's. Peter was lucky enough to drive Kitty in his small car.

"This is the high spot of the evening," he said as he took his place beside her. "I say," he went on eagerly, "suppose we don't go over to your uncle's? Suppose we take a spin up the River Road and let Uncle Albert exhibit his collection by himself?"

For a moment Kitty was sorely tempted. It was such a gorgeous night, warm and moon-lighted and full of the delicious scents of spring, and young Peter was so insistent and his car was so comfortable, but Common Sense strongly advised her to refuse the invitation, tempting as it was. She shook her head.

"No!" The refusal was full of regret. "It would be rude, and Uncle Albert detests rudeness in young people. We needn't stay all evening," she added as he gave an impatient exclamation and wanted to know why she should care what an old man detested. "There will be time enough for a spin up the River Road after we have made our manners."

The distance between the two houses was not long enough for an argument, and when Kitty jumped out and ran up the steps Peter was at her heels. Kitty

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extended a very pretty welcome,—Uncle Albert would have been proud of her—to the older people when they arrived in the sober limousine, and led them to the living room, which was deserted by the family. And then she went to the library to find Uncle Albert.

There was no one in the library but Bert, who was reading one of the magazines which Uncle Albert loathed, in Uncle Albert's own chair.

"Where is everybody?" demanded Kitty. "Where is Uncle Albert?"

"At the movies." Bert turned a page without raising his eyes from the loathsome magazine.

"The movies!" Kitty would not have been more surprised if Bert had told her that Uncle Albert was on Mars. Uncle Albert never went to the movies. He said they were low and cheap.

"George made a fuss because he didn't want to stay home, and he didn't want to go alone. Aunt Sue had a headache, and so Uncle Albert sacrificed himself on the altar of his family. I hope he enjoys himself."

"What a shame!" sighed Kitty. "Bert, old Mr. and Mrs. Simmons have brought a couple of men to see Uncle Albert's pictures. One of them is an American and the other is an Italian."

"An Italian!" Bert took his eyes from his loathsome magazine and stared at Kitty, before he threw down the paper and jumped to his feet. "An Italian!" he frowned.

And suddenly Kitty remembered all that Bert had told her about the art treasures of Italy and the Italian government agents, all that Gian Moroni had told Bert about the Patesta Raphael, and she was frightened, for like a flash she remembered also where she had seen Mr. Nicola before. She had seen him in Uncle

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Albert's own gallery the night of Sybil's party. He was the man with what Andy Macnamara had called a macaroni type of face. "Oh, Bert!" she cried in dismay. "What shall we do?" How could she have forgotten Uncle Albert and Gian Moroni's story?

"Wait a minute!" Oddly enough Bert, the socialist, who believed that all creative work belongs to the people, felt a big impulsive tug to protect Uncle Albert's private collection. He could not understand that tug but he could feel it, and he put a detaining hand on Kitty's arm and told her to wait a minute.

The slam of a door, and George's shrill voice shattered the minute. Kitty drew a quick breath of relief.

"I bet you couldn't have done that, Uncle Albert!" George was saying as they crossed the wide hall. "I bet you couldn't throw one man out of the window and shoot another one and tie up another one when they came to take the emeralds, you'd stolen from a Chinese temple."

"No," Uncle Albert was honest. "I never could have done all that."

"Let's get something to eat now?" suggested George. "Some cake or pie or something?"

"H-sh!" Kitty stood in the library doorway with her finger on her lips. "Uncle Albert, let George go and get his cake, and you come here, please!"

The telephone rang as Uncle Albert came into the room.

"You take the message, Bert," he said, for Bert often took messages for him and gave messages from him. "Just a minute, Kitty!"

Kitty tapped the floor impatiently with her satin

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slipper as she waited, and she wondered what Uncle Albert would say when he heard who were in the living room.

"It's a cable!" Bert turned to tell Uncle Albert. "A cable from Rome, Maclean says. The message is 'finished.'"

"Finished!" repeated Uncle Albert. "From Rome?" His face brightened. "Are you sure, Bert? Get the date." When Bert gave him the date and repeated the message Uncle Albert looked as if he had just been presented with all the contents of the Uffizzi, if not with the Pitti, also. "That's good!" he said heartily. "That's good! Now then, Kitty!" he turned to her as she stood tapping the rug with her satin slipper, "what is it?"

Kitty and Bert watched him closely as Kitty told him who were in his living room, and they were positive that an odd expression crossed his face. Kitty had meant to tell him about Gian Moroni and the Patesta Raphael, but she found that she could not look into his kind old face and tell him that he was suspected of stealing a picture and covering it with a coat of black paint. It was strange but neither of them could say a word about that.

"This Mr. Nicola told me himself," Kitty went on rather breathlessly, "that the Italian government is going to get back a lot of its old pictures. I never thought of what Bert told us that first night, you know, when old Mr. Simmons asked if you would show his friends your collection. I don't see why I didn't! I must have had something else on my mind." She colored as she admitted that her mind had been too full to contain any recollection of Bert's story. "I'm awfully sorry," she added, and waited for Uncle

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Albert <sup>to</sup> say that he was sorry, too, but that it did not matter and Kitty was not to think of it again.

But Uncle Albert only murmured "H-m," and rubbed his chin with his wrinkled hand. "H-m," he said again. "Kitty, suppose you and Bert go in and talk to these people. I'll be with you directly."

As Kitty and Bert left the library they saw Uncle Albert go into the gallery, and they looked at each other.

"Oh, Bert!" whimpered Kitty. "Oh, Bert!"

"Buck up, Kitty," he advised. "Buck up. Uncle Albert must know what he is doing."

Young Peter Simmons was the only one of the guests who seemed to have missed Kitty, for the others were looking at the many treasures scattered through the room. Young Peter sprang to his feet and came to meet Kitty as if she had been away a month instead of a few minutes.

"Well," he began, but she shook her head. It was not at all well to her bewildered black head.

Uncle Albert followed them almost at once and he was as unconcerned in his greeting as if every picture in his gallery had been the personal gift of the Italian government. Kitty devoutly hoped that they had, although she knew they hadn't.

When they went into the gallery Kitty's eyes flew at once to the corner where a blackened old picture had made the wall look as if a hole had been torn in it. The picture was not there. The wall presented a perfectly unbroken appearance. Kitty went closer to make sure that her eyes told her the truth. But they did. The old blackened painting had disappeared. It really had. She looked at Bert, who was staring at the corner also.

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"Uncle Albert must have hidden it," Bert told her in a low whisper. "That's why he came in here. Then his old picture is the Patesta Raphael, and he knows that the Patestans are looking for it! Honestly, Kitty, I didn't believe it was! But if it wasn't, why did Uncle Albert slip in here and take it down? The sly old fox!" But instead of looking at the old granduncle whom he called names, Bert watched Mr. Nicola, who had his nose close to the paintings, as if he could tell more about them with his nose than with his eyes, and who was talking in a low voice to Mr. Williams. Uncle Albert stood at one side and listened to old Peter Simmons' opinions on art as if Uncle Albert did not care a button for Mr. Nicola's low whispers.

"Come on," whispered Peter to Kitty. "Come on, and we'll have our spin. They'll never miss us!"

Kitty shook her head and moved away from him toward Uncle Albert. She stared at Mr. Nicola, who had reached the corner which contained the only vacant wall space in the gallery. It seemed to Kitty that Mr. Nicola regarded that vacant corner suspiciously, and she visualized the way he had examined it the night of Sybil's party.

"You have a very representative collection, Mr. Galusha," he said, and Kitty recognized his accent again as Neapolitan. "But why do you ignore Raphael? Every other artist of the Italian Renaissance is here except Raphael. Why don't you have Raphael?"

Kitty and Bert, their thoughts on the Patesta Raphael, waited breathlessly for Uncle Albert to answer a question which was so full of meaning to them.



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"I have never been able to find a Raphael which suited me," Uncle Albert answered carelessly. "It isn't always easy to find an old master that you want to buy."

"And it will be less easy!" promised the Italian sharply. "Italy will keep a closer watch on her treasures. American millionaires will not be able to carry them out of the country any more. And some of the pictures now in American galleries are coming back to Italy!" he exclaimed loudly. To Bert and Kitty the words were a threat. "The Italian government will reclaim them."

"Indeed!" murmured Uncle Albert politely. "You will approve of that, Bert. My nephew," he told Mr. Nicola, "believes in government ownership of all creative work. Tell me what you think of this, Mr. Nicola?" And he called the Italian's attention to a small canvas which he had bought for a Botticelli but which the curator of the Waloo Art Museum declared Botticelli had never seen.

Kitty drew a deep breath and discovered that she was trembling. How could Uncle Albert be so unconcerned unless he was innocent of the theft of the Patesta picture? But if he was innocent, why had he hidden his old blackened painting? And if he was not innocent, how could he stand there and discuss Botticelli so calmly with this Mr. Nicola? Kitty was positive that Mr. Nicola knew all about the Patesta Raphael and she was almost sure that Uncle Albert knew he did, for Uncle Albert was not a bit like himself, not a bit. She could see the difference, and she hated the gallery and the collection which had turned her honest old uncle into a cheat and a rascal. She

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could not breathe in the gallery. She turned quickly to Peter.

"Let us run away now!" she said quickly, and in spite of her best effort her voice shook. "Let us go for that spin!"

## XXI

KITTY could not sleep that night. She had too many men on her mind. There was Uncle Albert, who was worrying her almost to death, and there was young Peter Simmons, who was scaring her almost to death. She could not believe that Uncle Albert was the hero of the tale Gian Moroni had told, and yet Uncle Albert was so funny about that one picture in his gallery. He would talk for hours about any other picture, about all the other pictures, but he would never say one word about the canvas which looked as if a can of black paint had been spilled over it. If Kitty was suspicious of her uncle it was her uncle's fault, he acted so suspiciously. But no matter if Uncle Albert had stolen every picture in Europe Kitty would stand by him because he was a poor, forlorn, old man who was doing his best to carry out an ideal. Uncle Albert, dictatorial and blind and old-fashioned as he was, had been mighty good to her, Kitty decided in the still watches of the night, and the least she could do was to stand by him and let him know that she appreciated his efforts if she did not approve of his ideal.

And if you could have searched her thoughts you would have discovered that Uncle Albert's good deed was the opportunity he had given Kitty to meet young Peter Simmons. The very name—Peter Simmons—sent the blood thumping through Kitty's veins and made her heart beat faster. It was ridiculous, she told herself firmly, perfectly ridiculous, to be in such a

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turmoil over a man she had known little more than twenty-four hours. It was too much like Sybil. But Kitty had to admit that she was in more of a turmoil than she had ever been in all of her life. And of course she had really known Peter Simmons an age; why, it was eight months since she had met him in his office and taken ten dollars from him! She admitted quite frankly that she liked young Peter more than she had ever liked a young man, and she adored his grandmother, who was a love, and his grandfather, who was a dear. And what a human dynamo young Peter was! He would get whatever he went after because he threw himself into the pursuit with a whole-hearted enthusiasm which was bound to bring success. She remembered that when she was in college she had been told that Emerson had said nothing great is accomplished without enthusiasm. Measured by his enthusiasm, young Peter Simmons was going to do very great things indeed. She had never met a man like young Peter, she thought again, although she had met any number of men, companies of them, regiments of them, and it must be because he was such a rare and unusual type that he was keeping her awake. She turned her pillow and thumped it and vowed that she would not stay awake and think about young Peter Simmons another minute.

But when she stopped thinking about young Peter Simmons she began to think about old Uncle Albert again, for she had discovered that she loved her old uncle too much to believe that he was a cheat and a rascal in spite of the evidence—Gian Moroni, Bert, and the old black picture—against him. And she loved him too much to let him be made into a laughingstock for the world. It would kill Uncle Albert if all the

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world laughed at him. But how could she help him? She groaned and wondered if she ever would have any sleep at all.

And then she heard a noise in the hall, a stealthy step which made her sit up in her bed and listen anxiously. Yes, there it was again, a soft tread which she never would have heard if she had not been so wide-awake. Her thoughts flew to the gallery and to Uncle Albert and the Patestans again, and before she knew it she was out of her bed. Throwing her kimono around her she cautiously opened her door so that she could listen. If the Patestans were trying to steal Uncle Albert's picture she wanted to know it. My gracious! some one should know it and tell Uncle Albert and call the police and do something!

Through the crack of the door she could see but a small part of the hall which was dimly illuminated by a low night light, and she listened so intently that she almost stopped breathing. She heard the stealthy steps come closer. What would she do when they passed her door, which was open just a crack? She was positive that the stealthy stepper was a burglar, for no one but burglars prowl through houses in the dead of night. She was just ready to scream and rouse the house so that she could share the responsibility with some one—any one!—when the stealthy stepper came within her vision. She put her hand over her mouth quickly to muffle her surprised squeal, for the stealthy stepper was Uncle Albert. He came down the hall softly like a thief, and he carried a roll under his arm. Instinct told Kitty what that roll was. It was the Patesta Raphael, the old blackened painting, which had hung in the corner of the gallery. She stared and stared, and Uncle Albert, as if he felt some strong

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force, stopped at Kitty's door. When he saw that it was ajar, he put out his hand and drew it shut.

Kitty fell breathlessly on her bed. "My goodness gracious!" she gasped. "My gracious goodness!"

Of course this was Uncle Albert's own house, and he had a perfect right to wander around it at any hour, day or night, and carry anything he pleased. If Kitty had seen him on any other night she would have thought that he was troubled with insomnia or that he might be a somnambulist, but to-night—Kitty burrowed her head in her pillow and asked the pillow for goodness sake to tell her what it all meant! Before she became a member of Uncle Albert's made-to-order family Kitty had had nothing to worry over but the Republicans and the Democrats and the Non-Partisans, and they had been nothing to Uncle Albert and his old pictures. What did it mean, anyway?

She asked the question over and over until she fell into a troubled sleep, but when she awoke in the morning the first thing she did was to ask herself fretfully what it all meant, anyway?

"Oh, well!" she decided with a troubled sigh, "I can't do anything but stand by. I can only keep my eyes open and watch Uncle Albert and that horrid Mr. Nicola with his macaroni face and the old picture. You should have three eyes instead of two if you have to watch three things," she impatiently told the girl in the mirror who looked like a slim boy of long ago in her satin "knickers" and camisole.

There was no doubt that she was puzzled. Trouble showed in the little frown between her eyes and in the question which was in her eyes. Now that her suspicions were fully awake there were so many things which she remembered to strengthen them. There

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was the Sunday before Uncle Albert's party when Gian Moroni had come to see Bert. Kitty was on the stairs when Hoskins admitted him and she stood still in surprise. Hoskins went to tell Bert, and his back was barely turned when Gian darted toward the gallery.

"Hello!" Luckily Bert had come from the library just in time to intercept him. "Where are you going, Moroni?"

Gian stopped dead just outside the gallery door, and the face he turned to Bert wore an innocent smile. "I was going to look at Mr. Galusha's pictures while I waited for you," he said.

Kitty held her breath as she stood on the stairs. The old black picture hung in the corner of the gallery then, and would Bert take the Italian in and show him the letters P and A and a space and then an S? Bert believed so strongly that the Patesta Raphael should go back to Patesta that he might do anything. Perhaps there had been a time when Bert would have taken any one into his uncle's gallery and even taken a picture from the wall, but that time was not this time for Bert looked at Gian and shook his head.

"Mr. Galusha can't have strangers traipsing into his gallery!"

Kitty could not believe her ears. Surely the Bert who believed in municipal ownership of all creative work would never have said that.

"Mr. Galusha is an autocrat! a czar!" snapped Gian. "He should remember what the people did to the Russian czar!"

Bert stopped him sharply. "Perhaps Mr. Galusha is an autocrat, but you know, Moroni, you would be an autocrat, too, if you were in Mr. Galusha's shoes. I'm

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beginning to understand, my friend, that socialism is the dream of people who have never had anything."

"It is a danger to the men who always have had everything!" retorted Gian with a snarl.

"You underrate them," smiled Bert. "The American men became great through their own efforts. They weren't born to wealth and power. And a man who has had the brains to make a fortune will have the brains to keep it. You can't work that European stuff in America, Gian! You'll have to get a new angle over here. What was it you wanted to see me about?"

Kitty did not wait to hear what Gian wanted, but stole up the stairs. She had never been more surprised. She had never expected to hear Bert defend Uncle Albert, to admit that America was different from Europe, that the problem on one side of the Atlantic was not the same that it was on the other. She knew why Gian had come to see Bert. No matter what he said she knew that he had hoped to slip into the gallery. She had seen him talking to Mr. Nicola one day when she had driven down to the settlement with Aunt Susanne, although she had not known then who Mr. Nicola was. She knew now, and the knowledge brought a puzzled frown between her eyes.

Bert wore a frown, too, and Sybil acted as if she had more than usual on her mind. Even Vernon had an absent-minded air. George was the only member of the family whose heart and mind were at ease, for George asked for what he wanted and was seldom refused cake or apples. Aunt Susanne's manner was the oddest of all. You would have thought that she was walking on the crust of a volcano and expected to break through and burn to ashes at any moment. Uncle Albert taxed her with it.



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"What's the matter with this house?" he asked fractiously, for until recently he had been perfectly satisfied with his house. "There's a distrustful atmosphere about it that I don't like. You feel it as soon as you open the door. I don't like it!" he repeated, "and I shan't have it! What's worrying you, Sue? You might as well tell me, for a blind man on a galloping horse would have no trouble to know that you have something on your mind."

"Why, Albert Galusha!" mumbled Aunt Susanne, and she tried to take the frown from between her brows and put a smile on her lips, but it was such a wry smile that Uncle Albert grunted at it.

"You might as well tell me!" he repeated, and then he startled her by demanding quickly, suspiciously: "I say, Sue, you really lost your husband, didn't you?"

Aunt Susanne's face turned an unpleasant gray and she stammered and gulped as she said: "Why, Albert Galusha!"

"In that fool movie George took me to the other night there was a woman who pretended her husband was dead. She made me think of you, Sue. But that isn't your trouble, is it? If your husband is alive and bothering you just tell me. You're under my care now, and I'll look after you as I would one of the girls. You needn't worry!"

Aunt Susanne swallowed and stared. "Albert," she began desperately, and she had to swallow hard before she could continue, "I don't believe I can stay here any longer!"

"Not stay!" Uncle Albert was so surprised that he gulped, also. "What do you mean? Why can't you stay?" He was determined to get to the bottom of this most surprising situation and to do it at once.

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Aunt Susanne turned away so that she would not have to meet his shrewd old eyes. "Since I came to Waloo," she mumbled, "I've found out that I'm interested in all these new ideas that you hate. I want to learn all about them, and you wouldn't want me to learn anything if I stayed here."

"Why, Sue Ellsworth!" Uncle Albert felt that his safe old world was tottering around him. "Why, Sue Ellsworth!"

"So I think I'll go," repeated Aunt Susanne feebly.

Uncle Albert glared at her for a second before he went to the door and called, shouted rather: "Kitty! Sybil! Come here! I want you!"

They ran across from the living room at once. No one would have hesitated to answer that peremptory call.

"What is it?" asked Kitty. "What is it, Uncle Albert?"

"Your Aunt Sue wants to leave us!" he told them in furious disgust. "That's what it is. This damn progressive wave has caught her, and she wants to go off and live in a 'one room, kitchenette and bath.' I never was so amazed in my life! Nor so disgusted. I'm disappointed in you, Sue!"

He was so amazed and so disappointed and so disgusted that Kitty would have laughed in his face if she had not seen Aunt Susanne's face. There was real trouble in Aunt Susanne's faded eyes.

"Why, Aunt Susanne!" she exclaimed a little impatiently. It did seem as if she had enough to worry about without adding Aunt Susanne to her load. "Why, Aunt Susanne!"

Uncle Albert was tramping up and down with short, excited steps. "I've expected a flare-up from one of

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the young people, Bert, or you, Kitty. But Sue! What in thunder do you want that you haven't got? Here I took you from your run-down old home and brought you here and put you at the head of my own family! You never used to act like this, Sue. I swear you never did! That husband must have been a wonder to change you as he did when you were only married——" he stopped as he realized that he did not know how long Aunt Susanne had been married. "How long were you married, Sue?" he demanded in his most autocratic manner.

Aunt Susanne moaned and dropped into a chair and hid her face behind her hands. "That's it," she wailed, so that he had to stoop over her to catch the words. "That's it! I never was married in my life, and Hester Markley's coming from Manitou to-morrow, and she'll tell you I never was!"

Uncle Albert caught but the one phrase. "Never married!" he repeated. He looked at the girls and shook his head. "What do you mean, Sue? Never married?"

"I lied when I came here, Albert!" Aunt Sue sobbed from behind the shelter of her shaking hands. "When I got your letter asking me to tell you of a refined, cultured widow—a woman like me, you said—it made me crazy to come to the city and see the things I had read about in the papers and magazines. And so I wrote you that I'd lost my husband. It didn't seem as if it would do any one any harm to say that. It wasn't really a lie!" She put down her hands and looked at him with a flash of real courage. "It was true. I did lose my husband, for I never found him! And I came, and I tried to do what you asked me to do, but you nearly drove me wild with your Mrs.

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"Ellsworth this and your Mrs. Ellsworth that. I can't stand it any longer! And Hester Markley is coming to-morrow! She wrote she was, and I know she would tell you the truth! I'm not Mrs. anybody. I never was married! I'm just an—an old"—she hiccuped—"an old maid!"

"God bless my soul!" murmured Uncle Albert helplessly. His eyes bulged. To think that Sue—Sue, whom he trusted—had lied to him. She had lied to him and deceived him. No wonder his world rocked.

Kitty ran across the room to put her arms around the shrinking little figure. "It is very pleasant to be an old maid these days, Aunt Susanne," she whispered. "But it must have been fierce in Manitou. I'm glad you wrote Uncle Albert you had lost your husband!" It was almost impossible to keep the laughter from her face and her voice. "We never should have known you if you had told the truth! And you have been so sweet to us! And—and——" Her sense of humor was too strong and she had to stop and laugh. "It is too funny!"

After a moment's fierce glare Uncle Albert laughed, too. "Sue, you big fool!" he muttered in the middle of his laugh.

"It isn't any surprise to me!" Sybil patted Aunt Susanne's shoulder.

"Did Peter Simmons tell you?" demanded Aunt Susanne sitting up straight again, now that her awful burden of deceit was taken from her back.

"Did he know? No, it wasn't Peter Simmons. It was a man from Manitou I met the other day. He told me that Miss Sue Ellsworth wasn't married when she left Manitou. I didn't say anything. I thought I would save it until you wouldn't let me do something

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I wanted to do," she explained with a frankness which was Sybil.

Uncle Albert stared at Sybil. "Sybil, you little schemer!" he said, and then he looked at Aunt Susanne and his face changed again.

"You must have wanted to get away from Manitou," was all he said.

"I did! I did!" wailed Aunt Susanne, crumpling her handkerchief. "And I'm not going back. I'll take one of those little apartments with built-in beds, and be just as progressive as I please."

"You'll do nothing of the sort!" Uncle Albert told her sharply. "You'll stay here and behave yourself!"

"But I'm not a widow, and you wanted a widow! And I shan't be called Mrs. Ellsworth another day. It makes me sick! I'm tired of living a lie! And if I stayed here every one would know that I've been a liar and a cheat!" she moaned.

"Oh, no, they won't," coaxed Kitty. "People never listen to names. We'll call you Miss Ellsworth now and every one will think that is what we always called you. They'll never remember about any Mrs. Ellsworth!"

Aunt Susanne raised her tear-wet eyes and looked at Kitty before she looked at Uncle Albert. She did not want to leave Uncle Albert and his family, but she was tired of her deceit. She was too honest at heart to enjoy a masquerade.

"Of course they will!" trumpeted Uncle Albert. He quite agreed with Kitty. "Go and wash your face, Sue, and stop playing the fool. We'll go on as we have been doing." He looked at Kitty and Sybil and suspicion was in his old eyes. "I hope you haven't

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any secrets from me!" he said sharply. "I hope you aren't trying to deceive me by having secrets?"

"Why, Uncle Albert!" exclaimed Sybil, and her exclamation might mean anything.

Uncle Albert turned away from her with a grunt. "Well, Kitty," he said impatiently. "How about you? You haven't any secrets from me, have you?"

Kitty flushed. She wished she had the courage to look Uncle Albert in the face and tell him the secret which was ruining her perfectly good nights and threatening to turn her black hair white. But she found that she did not have courage enough to do that, and as Uncle Albert repeated his question with even more impatience and more suspicion, she snatched a leaf from Sybil's book.

"Why, Uncle Albert!" she exclaimed.

## XXII

THE puzzled little frown which Kitty wore worried young Peter Simmons, who wanted "his girl" to wear a face like a June day, bright and sunny. One afternoon when Peter saw Kitty walking slowly home, as if home were the very last place she wished to reach, Peter drove his car up to her and killed two birds with one stone. He completely violated a traffic ordinance, and he startled Kitty so that she could not say one word when she looked up and saw him.

"I'll take you home!" Peter offered eagerly. "Come on in!"

As Uncle Albert's big marble mansion was only at the end of the block and it would not take Peter much out of his way if he drove Kitty there, she obediently stepped in. But instead of taking her home Peter broke another traffic ordinance all to flinders—the one which tells a chauffeur that he shall not turn around in the middle of a block—and dashed off in the opposite direction, away from Uncle Albert's big marble mansion which stood like a hotel at the other end of the block.

"Why—why——" began Kitty when she discovered that Peter was looking for the long way which, according to an old proverb, would be the short way, to take her home.

"That's all right," declared Peter. "I haven't seen you for twenty-four hours and then you looked as you do now, as if you had a dark and guilty secret."

"George has the mumps!" exclaimed Kitty quickly,

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as if George's mumps were the reason for the puzzled frown which made Peter think she had a dark and guilty secret. What wonderful eyes young Peter Simmons had! Why, he saw everything, just everything, even a puzzled frown on a girl's face—and a dark and guilty secret in a girl's heart.

"Mumps!" sneered Peter. "Swollen jaws never put that frown on your face. It takes more than mumps to make a girl like you look as if she were afraid to go home for fear of what she will find there. Want to tell me all about it?" he wheedled. "Perhaps I can let a little light and air in on your dark secret."

Kitty gave a quick gasp. How wonderful Peter really was! And how observing! No one else had noticed that she had a secret of any kind, and Peter had seen that she had a dark and guilty secret. He really was too wonderful! But she shook her head. "I can't tell you," she said sadly. She wished she could. She was almost sure that he could let light and air in on her dark secret, but she could not tell any one, even the wonderful young Peter Simmons, about Uncle Albert and the Patesta Raphael. It would not be loyal to tell. Kitty had learned that loyalty was one thing which a member of a family owed to his family. She had always laughed scornfully at family unity, but she did not laugh now that she was practicing it; she just looked unhappy and uncomfortable.

Peter was disappointed. "You know best," he said, as cheerily as his disappointment would let him speak. "I'd like to help you in any way I can. I never wanted to help a girl as I want to help you," he added emphatically, and the nice brown shade which Montana wind and sun had tinted his face was mixed with Minnesota red as he looked at Kitty.



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Kitty only sighed and kept her red lips shut over her secret. She never looked at Peter to see the mixed brown and red in his face, but she did jump when Peter exclaimed impulsively as if the words just dashed themselves across his lips without any aid from him at all:

"You know I'm just crazy about you!"

Then Kitty did look at him. She knew, of course, that Peter liked her, at least she did hope that he liked her, but she had never imagined that he was just crazy about her.

"The idea!" was all she could stammer. "The very idea!"

"Yes," went on Peter firmly, and there was more Minnesota red in his face than Montana brown. "I'm crazy about you, and I hope you are a little crazy about me? I'd like to tell you something about my work and the way I live," he added, as Kitty said never a word, but just sat there beside him with her eyes on the tip of her shoe.

But Kitty's face was as pink as a rose and her heart was beating so fast that when Peter told her a second time that he would like to tell her something about his work, she gasped as she murmured politely: "I'll be glad to hear about it!"

Peter drew a long breath and took his brown hand from the wheel to put it on Kitty's ungloved fingers which were resting on her knee. It was just for a moment that he held them, but his touch set Kitty on fire. Little flames seemed to run from Peter's hand to the very farthest corner of her, and she could not have said a word to save her life.

"That's something!" declared Peter, and his voice shook as if perhaps the flame were burning through him also. "It's a great thing that you are willing to

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hear about me! It's everything!" he decided with another deep breath, before he told her of the railroad he was building in Montana with the help of a big gang of Italians.

"It's through a rather God-forsaken country," he admitted, "and my wife will have to be mighty crazy about me to be willing to live there, for I shall want her right with me in a shack or a box car. I shan't want her in a hotel in the nearest town where I might go over Sunday when things are running well. She'll have to be satisfied with scenery instead of theaters and parties and excitement generally, although Lord knows we have excitement enough sometimes when material is delayed or the dagos strike. But that doesn't happen half as often as it could. But you see, my wife," he explained carefully so that Kitty would understand all about his wife, "will have to get a large share of her good times out of the knowledge that she is helping in a big job, opening up new land for people to make homes and raise more good Americans. Do you think the loneliness and the lack of dances and bridge would scare her?" He bent to peer into Kitty's face as if he would rather read the answer to his question in Kitty's blue eyes than hear it from Kitty's red lips.

"It wouldn't scare me!" Kitty cried impulsively and then she was ashamed of her impulsiveness. "I—I mean I've always been interested in Americanization work!" she explained quickly.

"You dear—darling!" The words fairly hurled themselves across Peter's lips, and his hand caught her fingers again and pressed them hard. "You have real courage, for it will take courage for a girl to go out in the wilds of Montana and make a home for a chap. I tell you, honey, the pioneer women did as much

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as the pioneer men to make this country what it is! Maybe they didn't have the vote then but they had the big job. You will have both, Kitty Forsythe! Of course I shan't always live in the wilds of Montana," he explained, "but I do like construction work, and I do like to feel that I'm doing something practical, adding something real to the world as well as earning my living. But I never really expected to find a girl who felt that way, too! I remember the first time I saw you—, remember?—when you left the office I said to myself: 'Gee whiz, but that's a corking peach, Peter Simmons, but she's the kind who wouldn't give up her job, not for any man on earth!'"

"And I wouldn't!" exclaimed Kitty with so much emphasis that the radiance left Peter's face blank and bewildered.

"You wouldn't!" The radiance left his voice all dull and heavy also.

"No, I wouldn't!" repeated Kitty. "I'd never be satisfied to be without a job. I'm a loafer for the present, to oblige old Uncle Albert, but just as soon as his year is up I'll have another job."

"You will!" Peter looked as if all of his gang of laborers had struck and as if all of his material had been delayed. He could not have looked more baffled nor more discouraged.

"Indeed I will!"

"Then my proposition doesn't interest you?" Peter asked still in a daze.

"What proposition?" Behind a perfectly sober face Kitty was all happy, rosy laughter.

Peter pulled his car under the shade of a big willow tree on a deserted stretch of the River Boulevard and faced her as he put his proposition to her in straight-

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forward, businesslike terms. "To come out to Montana with me and help me build this railroad which will open a new country where people may make new homes." There was a suggestion of Uncle Albert about Peter when he spoke of those new homes, but Kitty never saw it. "I know we haven't known each other very long," Peter went on quickly. "But you don't have to see people every day for years to know you are crazy about them. I want you to help me. I'm wild about you," he repeated, "about your pretty self and your clever head and your big heart and your generous hands. Oh, Lord! I've got to have you with me!" And he took both of her hands and held them close as his eager eyes read her face to see if she wanted him with her.

"Well," Kitty could not keep her voice steady, although, goodness knows, she tried hard enough, "that would be some job, to help build a railroad so that more people can have homes." In spite of the fact that her heart was beating so fast that she was almost suffocated she had to stop when she said that word and laugh chokingly. "It's funny that I should want to help people have homes! I never believed in homes until now. But I've always believed in Americanization work!"

"You darling!" Peter's arm swept around her and gathered her close. His eager, hungry lips found hers again and again. "You dear darling! You scared me stiff! A chap never knows what you girls will do! Homes? You bet you believe in homes now! Lord, what a home we'll have! In a box car or a shack or a tent," he promised royally. "Does it frighten you?" he asked adoringly.

And Kitty never stamped her foot as she had done

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for her Uncle Albert. She never declared that she hated homes, that the word was just a synonym for jail, that no one could develop an individuality in the cramping boundaries of a home. She never even thought of stamping her foot, and she discovered that she believed most thoroughly in homes. She nestled closer to young Peter Simmons and whispered that it was perfectly ridiculous, but she was afraid that she was crazy about him, too, and she had always believed in love at first sight. She had always known that she would recognize her mate as soon as she should see him. It would not take her any long years and years and years to know him. That was why she had never been interested in other men.

"Other men!" interrupted Peter with a green edge to his voice. "So there have been other men, have there?"

"Not many," laughed Kitty, it was such fun to hear Peter's voice when it had a green edge. "And I never really cared for one of them. We never thought alike on a single big, vital question," she explained.

"And do we?" He smiled at her as if he were perfectly satisfied with her explanation.

"I don't know!" Kitty made a very amazing discovery. Dear me, what a lot she was learning! "But questions don't seem as important as they did. People," she peeped at him from under her long black lashes, "are so much more important than things."

"I should say they were! And more important than either is the astounding fact that we found each other and that we love each other. We shall have all of our lives to talk about questions. We can talk about them on our way west. You know, honey girl, that most of

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my time in Waloo is up. I shall have to go back in three weeks. Will you go with me?" He put his arm around her again as he asked her if she would go west with him.

"Oh!" Kitty was torn between love and obligation. "I can't!" she explained unhappily. "I can't. I belong to Uncle Albert until next February. He bought this year from me!"

Peter laughed scornfully when he heard that old Uncle Albert had bought a year from Kitty Forsythe, but he stopped laughing when she told him the terms of the sale.

"I don't care a cent for his old money!" Kitty finished excitedly.

"No, of course, you don't, but a hundred thousand is quite a bit of cash."

She looked up quickly. "Are you going to marry me for my money?" she wanted to know at once.

He bent and kissed her. "Sure I am. In these days of high prices and competing girls a man has to do the best he can for himself. Honestly, darling, your Uncle Albert is an old nut! His ridiculous old contract wouldn't hold water for a second. You don't have to keep it any longer than you please."

"But if I break it the others lose. That doesn't seem fair, does it? But Uncle Albert made it very plain that we were to stand together or fall together. And I can't rob the others. A hundred thousand, as you said, is a lot of money. And I can't break my word, can I? And the League of Women Voters!" She was aghast as she remembered all her debtors. "You know, Peter Simmons, when Mrs. Bagehot told me that she would rather have a check for ten thousand dollars than my services I was furious. The first

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month I was with Uncle Albert I hated the League and every one connected with it. And then, well, I began to see that Uncle Albert hadn't uprooted us just to have his own way, but that he really was trying to help us, and so I stopped hating every one. And now I hope the League will do a lot of splendid work with the money it got for me. But, you see, it won't get a penny—no one will—unless I keep my word!"

"Your uncle would never hold you to it!" declared Peter, as if he knew Uncle Albert intimately.

"Oh, wouldn't he!" scornfully. "He made what he would do very plain at the beginning. He was so crazy to put over his idea of the necessity of the home that he tied us up tight. You know, Peter," she went on with a sweet seriousness which enchanted Peter and made him kiss her again, "I did think that a family was a drag, a handicap, always objecting to everything you wanted to do until you were glad to stop doing things. But since I have been with Uncle Albert," she made her confession with fascinating shyness, at least Peter found her shy confession fascinating, "I have learned that it means everything to know that there is some one who has the right to be interested in you and what you do, who pets you when you are downhearted and who cheers you when you are upbeat. I do think there is a lot in Uncle Albert's theory that the home is the kernel of the nation. I believe in my heart I'm strong now for Uncle Albert's theory—with reservations," she added laughingly, although there were tears in her eyes.

Peter kissed them away. "My word, honey, how you are going to adore the box car or the shack we'll have for a home! You bet I'll kiss the tears away

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and laugh with you. Come on, let's go over to Granny's and tell her the glad news and let her make a fuss over us. She'd love it!"

"I'd love it, too!" Kitty could never tell him how she would love to be fussed over. "But it wouldn't be fair to Uncle Albert. No, it wouldn't! Some day, Peter Simmons," she faced him with sparkling eyes and flushed cheeks, "some day I'll go with you to your grandmother and ask her to make a fuss over me!" she promised.

"Well," remarked Peter, making no effort to hide his disappointment, "just remember that I have to go back to Montana in three short weeks."

"Three weeks!" She sighed. "That sounds like to-morrow. Peter Simmons!" she turned to him again, "you know your Granny and my old Uncle Albert, not to mention Aunt Susanne and your father and mother and all the other relatives, would be horrified to hear that we were talking of going to Montana together when we have known each other only a couple of weeks!"

"Pooh!" contradicted Peter. "My old Granny has a young brain and a young heart in her old body. She understands perfectly that it never takes a year or two for me to know what I want. And, anyway, it is eight months since I met you! Don't forget that. As for your Uncle Albert, I think you are mistaken about him, Kitten dear! I think he would release you if you would give him the reason. He couldn't hold you here and be loyal to his slogan—'The home above all.' Come on, let's go and ask him."

"No!" Kitty was the hardest kind of adamant. "No, Peter. Not to-day. And even if he did release me I couldn't leave him now!" The puzzled little



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frown which had worried Peter was back on her face again.

"Why not?" demanded Peter.

"That isn't my secret." How she wished it was. She would have given it to Peter at once.

"Oh, well!" Peter made a failure of an attempt to be philosophic. "I'm disappointed, honey, awfully disappointed! But I suppose you know what you are doing. I shall only ask you to remember that a lot can happen in three weeks. Anything can happen!" he insisted optimistically.

Her face brightened and she squeezed his fingers hopefully. "My goodness! I hope something does happen!" she declared with fervor. "Something must happen if we both hope so, won't it, Peter dear?"

## XXIII

It was the next day, a day which Kitty had spent on the rosy mountain peaks when she thought of young Peter Simmons and in the dark blue depths of the cañon when she remembered Uncle Albert, that Uncle Albert spoke to Bert as they smoked in the library. Uncle Albert liked immensely to tell Bert that Bert's theories were nothing but drivel and that if he had had any real experience at all in the business world he would argue less and do more. Bert never lost his temper over Uncle Albert's impatient statements. He just laughed and told Uncle Albert that he could learn one or two things himself if he would open his eyes instead of tramping along blinded. To hear them you would have thought that they were always on the edge of a quarrel, but their talk ended invariably with the statement from Uncle Albert:

"You're young, Bert, young! When you are as old as I am you will know more than you do now!"

"Yes, I'm young," Bert would answer jubilantly. He knew how Uncle Albert envied him his youth. "I can wait!"

But this evening they did not argue about the world and the best method, allopathic or homeopathic, to cure it. Bert was thinking of a talk he had had with Gian, who had hunted him up at the factory to tell him that the Patestans would arrive in Waloo very shortly now. Bert wondered how much he should tell Uncle Albert and discovered to his surprise that he did not want to tell Uncle Albert a word. He did not wish to

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startle Uncle Albert by telling him that he might be made into a world laughingstock, but how could he repeat Gian's story without startling his old uncle? He was frowning over his pipe when Uncle Albert exclaimed far more impulsively than he usually spoke, for Uncle Albert gave you the impression that he carefully weighed and measured his words and used only those which were up to the standard.

"Bert," he said now, "what is the matter here? There is still something in the atmosphere that I can't understand, and it's very disagreeable, very disagreeable! What is it?"

Bert took his pipe from his mouth and looked at it instead of at Uncle Albert. "What do you mean?" he asked slowly, although he was almost sure he knew what Uncle Albert meant. If Uncle Albert was as clever as he thought he was he should have known what was the matter with his home.

"I've got to the bottom of the trouble with Sue," went on Uncle Albert, knitting his shaggy white brows in a tangle. "Crazy idea for her to try and deceive me. She might have known I would learn the truth. She is all right now! But Sybil and Kitty—— What's the matter with Kitty? She's got something on her mind!"

Bert laughed and began to smoke again. This was a question he could answer. "Yes, I guess she has!"

"What is it?" Uncle Albert wanted to know what was on Kitty's mind. "What is it, Bert? I have a right to know. God bless my soul! but a family does give a man considerable to think about! How are we going to keep George out of the pantry and away from the movies? I'm afraid that boy will stuff himself to death. Good thing the mumps will give his jaws and stomach a rest. And Vern is smoking too much and

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running around after that professional dancer. I won't have it! She's worse than his fiddle! And Sybil—— But we'll take Kitty first. What has she on her mind?"

"Well, so far as I can judge I should say that Kitty has young Peter Simmons on her mind."

"Young Peter Simmons!" Uncle Albert was surprised. "Why, I thought—— Didn't some one tell me that Kitty and young Parkyn were engaged?" He looked at Bert suspiciously as if he thought Bert might have been the some one.

"There may have been something between them in the old days, but Kitty has developed a lot since she came here, Uncle Albert," Bert said honestly. "Before she was training just one side of her, her independence, but now she's—she's"—he frowned as he tried to explain to Uncle Albert what had happened to Kitty—"developing all around, growing more womanly, I suppose you would say. At heart she'll always be more or less of a rebel and want to make the world better. She'll never be satisfied to stand still. And Arthur Parkyn is a—a cabbage. He's contented with the world as it is. If you haven't been blind you must have seen that he has been trotting around with Sybil!"

"I'm not so blind but I can see that Sybil has been trotting around after him. The child is shameless, Bert. She makes me blush, old as I am. But Kitty and young Simmons! Why, they haven't known each other a month!"

"What's time got to do with it?" Bert wanted to know. "It doesn't take time to recognize your girl when you find her. The meeting of a pair of eyes can tell you more than a year of days."

"Maybe, maybe," fussed Uncle Albert. "But do

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you think you can trust that kind of a—a feeling? I've always believed in the steady friendship which ripens into—into love." It made Uncle Albert very uncomfortable to talk of love.

But Bert shook his head. "I don't know anything about it, no one does, but I do know that I should never dare to stand in the way of honest love." The word did not make Bert a bit uncomfortable, he used it unblushingly and as if it meant no more to him than bread or butter. "The love Kitty has for Peter and Peter has for Kitty. You have only to see them together to know that it is all right. I shouldn't think you would object when you are so strong for homes."

Uncle Albert frowned. "I'm not objecting. I'm only inquiring. I don't object until my consent is asked and as yet neither Kitty nor young Simmons has said a word to me!" He seemed grieved that he had not been spoken to by Kitty or by Peter.

"You know why, don't you?"

"No, I don't!" he bristled. If Bert meant that it was his own fault he would tell Bert that it wasn't.

"Kitty can't marry Peter and go west with him because she is kept here by her contract with you," Bert told him bluntly.

"Contract with me?" It was a minute before Uncle Albert remembered the bargain he had made with Kitty. He snorted. "Well, if she cares more for money than she does for young Simmons——"

"It isn't that at all!" Bert was indignant at the interpretation Uncle Albert had given his words. Trust Uncle Albert to see the worst always! "You have her dead wrong. Kitty isn't thinking of herself at all, she's thinking of Sybil and Vern and George and me and the twins and the old *Beacon* and the

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League of Women Voters and the Waloo String Quartet. She doesn't want to rob us!"

"God bless my soul!" begged Uncle Albert. He spoke as if the operation of putting a new idea into his head had been a painful one. He stared at Bert to make sure that Bert was telling him the truth before he got up and went to the door. "Kitty!" he roared. "Kitty Forsythe! Come here!"

When Kitty came he looked at her as she stood before him, and he decided that Bert might be right. It would not be difficult for a man to fall in love with Kitty at once. He could do it as soon as he saw her if she always looked as she did now. Why, if he had been young Peter Simmons—— He sighed because he was only old Uncle Albert.

"Kitty," he said gruffly, as if he were displeased and disappointed in her. "What is this I hear about you and young Peter Simmons?"

Kitty turned scarlet. "I don't know!" she exclaimed truthfully, for how could she know what Uncle Albert might have heard? She flashed an indignant glance at telltale Bert, who only shrugged his shoulders and refused to look guilty.

"Yes, you do know!" contradicted Uncle Albert with a snap. "You needn't try to deceive me any longer. I declare I don't know what is the matter with women, never straight and aboveboard. There was Sue and now you! Why didn't you tell me you and young Simmons are engaged?" he asked sharply.

"Why—why——" murmured Kitty, wondering what Uncle Albert thought of this story he had heard of her and young Peter Simmons.

"If you aren't engaged you should be," Uncle Albert

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went on like a real autocrat. "You certainly haven't any business to run around with young Simmons as you are doing unless you are engaged to him. I declare I don't understand you, Kitty!" And it was very plain that he did not understand her. "Here is a splendid young man, a fine young fellow, who wants to marry you and you hang back as if—as if——"

"Who said he wanted to marry me?" interrupted Kitty eagerly. Had Peter been talking to Uncle Albert?

"My eyes aren't too old to see some things," grumbled Uncle Albert. "And my brain isn't too old to tell me a few more things. I don't know what is holding you back, Kitty, but I may as well tell you that I shall be glad to release you from your promise to me provided you are married and start a home of your own. What I wanted to do was to make you realize how important the home and home life are, and if you are clever enough to learn in six months and want to make a home with a smart, respectable young man"—Kitty crinkled her nose at the adjectives Uncle Albert found for Peter; they were never the ones she would have chosen—"it won't be necessary for you to stay out the year. I shall feel that the experiment has been a success as far as you are concerned. You shall have your hundred thousand on your wedding day," he promised royally.

"Uncle Albert!" Kitty's arms were around his neck, Kitty's lips against his wrinkled cheek. "But what about the others?—and the league?—if I don't stay out the year?"

So that was what was worrying her? Bert was right. The child was loyal, surprisingly loyal. "The others will be all right," Uncle Albert promised. "And your

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league, too. I'm surprised that you should think they wouldn't be all right!"

"That's exactly what Peter said!" exclaimed Kitty.

"He did? He knew me better than you did. My experiment hasn't turned out so badly, has it, Kitty?" He was as hungry for a word of praise as George was for a piece of cake or a banana.

"It's been heaven!" she exclaimed with another hug. "And you'll a ore the kind of a home Peter and I will have, Uncle Albert. It won't be any period afraid-to-live-in-it home. No, indeedy! It's going to be an honest-to-goodness home for two working people. I'll have to do all the work in it unless I have an Indian girl. Mary Fat Goose, Peter said her name was. And I want to do it! That's the strangest thing, Uncle Albert. I want to do it!" Kitty could not understand the transformation that had taken place in her and she did not expect Uncle Albert to understand it. He would just have to accept her word that it had taken place. "You said the home was the bulwark of the nation, and now that I've found Peter I'm just crazy to go into the bulwark business. And I want to be an honest partner in it. I agree with you perfectly, Uncle Albert, the home is the greatest place in the world!"

"Is it?" mumbled Uncle Albert, who could remember when Kitty had hotly declared that the home was the smallest place in the world.

"Do you remember," went on Kitty, "what we said that first day I was here about sleeping dogs? Well, you really did waken a sleeping dog in me. I never in the world thought that I was domestic, but I've discovered that I am! I'm awfully domestic!" And she looked around proudly as if she had made the discovery of the ages.



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"Of course you are, Kitty," smiled Aunt Susanne, who had come in to hear Kitty's discovery. "Of course you are. All girls are domestic at heart. The good Lord made them that way."

"That's what I said!" declared Uncle Albert, sinfully proud of the knowledge he had had. "I knew you were domestic."

"Well, I never suspected it," murmured Kitty.

"Mr. Peter Simmons," announced Hoskins in the doorway, "would like to see Miss Forsythe."

"Peter!" exclaimed Kitty joyfully. "Tell him to come in here, Hoskins." She turned an eager face to Uncle Albert. "You tell him, Uncle Albert, that you know I'm domestic," she begged.

"I shall!" roared Uncle Albert. "And now I hope you'll show me a smiling face. I'm tired of frowns. I've cleared your troubles for you, Kitty. You haven't anything to worry about now, have you?"

The bright radiance slipped from her face. "Yes, I have, Uncle Albert," she said sadly. "I still have something to worry about." And she astonished him by putting her arms around him again. "Uncle Albert," she promised almost tearfully, "I'll never leave you while you're in trouble!"

Uncle Albert pushed her away so that he could look into her face. "What do you mean?" he wanted to know. "Trouble! What do you mean, Kitty?"

But if he did not know Kitty could not tell him. Brave as Kitty was, and it had been her boast that she was afraid of nothing, she could not tell Uncle Albert of what Gian Moroni just the same as accused him. She could only look into his face and will him with all of her mind to tell her that he had had nothing to do

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with that Patesta Raphael. But Uncle Albert turned his eyes quickly away so that they looked beyond Kitty.

"Hello, young Peter Simmons!" he exclaimed, and to Kitty's ears he sounded as if he were glad to be interrupted by young Peter Simmons. "What is this I hear? I understand that you are planning to rob me of one of my girls!"

## XXIV

IF it had not been for Uncle Albert, Kitty would have moved right up to the top of the rosy mountain peak and stayed on it, but Uncle Albert kept pulling her down into the dark cañon. Kitty never wanted to think of Uncle Albert and what would happen when the men from Patesta learned that he had hidden the blackened old picture. She wanted to think of young Peter Simmons and the box car or shack or tent in Montana which would be their home.

Bad luck made Kitty look out of the window the next morning and see three men standing in front of the house, staring at it as if they would pierce the marble walls with their eager gaze. They were men with black, black hair and swarthy skins and they were clothed in rather a fantastic manner. One of them had gold rings in his ears—Kitty saw them gleam in the sun, and another wore high boots and the third—Kitty thought the third man had a strong family resemblance to Gian Moroni—had a red handkerchief tied around his neck. The three stood in front of Uncle Albert's house and stared and stared and stared at it.

Kitty saw them first when she glanced from the window to see if by any chance young Peter Simmons would be driving by to wave a happy good-morning to her, and she thought nothing of them. Half an hour later when she had read the morning paper she glanced out of the window again to see if by any chance young Peter Simmons would be passing on his way from the

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office to somewhere else, and the three men were still standing by the walk staring at the house. She did not think much of them even then, but when she looked out an hour later to see if by any chance she could find young Peter Simmons in her field of vision, and the three men were still looking eagerly at the house, she just had to ask herself what on earth they were doing there. It was very odd, to say the least, for three swarthy men, one of them with earrings and one of them in high boots and one of them with a red handkerchief around his neck, to spend the morning staring at the Galusha house even if it was an excellent reproduction of French Renaissance. To Kitty they were living confirmation, three very live confirmations, that the story was true which Gian Moroni had told Bert and which Bert had told Kitty. They startled her so that she would have dashed up to Uncle Albert, if Uncle Albert had been in the house, and told him the story just as she had heard it. But Uncle Albert was at his office, and Kitty had been told more than once that a man's office was sacred ground and should never be invaded by the women of his family. And a man's business hours were sacred, also, and should never be broken into by the women of his family. Anything which concerned the family could safely be left until a man had returned home.

But Kitty had to speak to some one, for the longer she looked at those three men the more uncomfortable she became. Her voice shook a bit when she asked Hoskins what he thought of the three strange men who were spending the morning gazing at the house. Hoskins smiled in a superior and slightly indulgent manner.

"I think they are laborers from a gang up at the

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corner, Miss Forsythe," he said. "I saw yesterday that the street was torn up. It's awful the way the city's money is wasted, isn't it, Miss Forsythe? Those dagos have been loafing there all morning."

"Dagos?" repeated Kitty faintly. So Hoskins thought the men were Italians, also. From the very bottom of her heart Kitty hoped that Hoskins was right and that the men were laborers, but at the top of her heart she was sure that Hoskins was all wrong. These men were not shirking their work. They were doing it, for their work was to find a stolen picture. They made her so nervous that she decided to go out and speak to them. She would put on her hat and leave the house as if she were going somewhere in particular, and she would stop when she came to them and ask them what they were looking at. She ran upstairs, but when she went out of the house the three disturbing confirmations had disappeared. She could not see any trace of them. The street was torn up at the corner, Hoskins was right about that, but the three men she was looking for were not with the gang which was at work. She stood looking about, feeling very much baffled and very helpless, when suddenly Mr. Nicola appeared beside her. He seemed to spring from the ground, he came so suddenly and so quietly. She was so surprised to see him that she gasped when he spoke to her. He told her very peremptorily that if she cared anything at all for her uncle she would beg him to see Mr. Nicola at once.

"We have written him that we know where a certain stolen picture is," went on Mr. Nicola with a threatening frown. He was no longer the smiling, suave Neapolitan artist old Peter Simmons had taken home to dine. Involuntarily Kitty stepped away from

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him, but he followed her. "We have told Mr. Galusha that we know who stole the picture and how it was stolen and that we are going to take it back to Italy. Mr. Galusha has answered nothing. But it will be most unfortunate for him if he continues to refuse to see me. I might arrange—but, no, tell him nothing of that. Tell him only that if I do not have the opportunity to talk to him inside of twenty-four hours, the law will have to take its course."

"The law?" faltered Kitty. It sounded dreadful to hear Mr. Nicola talk of the law and Uncle Albert.

"The law!" repeated Mr. Nicola firmly, and then he added two words which were even more disturbing: "Or worse!" meaningly. "A man, even a man as rich as Mr. Galusha, cannot break laws without——"

"I don't believe Uncle Albert ever broke the law!" Kitty broke in with furious indignation.

Mr. Nicola shrugged his shoulders. Kitty could have her own opinion, of course, but in his estimation her opinion was worth nothing at all.

"Ask your uncle where he got that old picture which used to hang in the corner of his gallery, the one he covered with the black paint," he suggested carelessly. "The Italians have stood a great deal from rich Americans, Miss Forsythe, but they will stand no more. We want the treasures which have been stolen from us. Your uncle can give us the Patesta Raphael, the picture which means so much to the poor Patestans, or he will have to take the consequences. And they will be very disagreeable, those consequences. It will not be pleasant for a man of Mr. Galusha's wealth and position to be branded as a thief and a scoundrel. He will not like it, and you will not like to be the

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niece of a man who will be known all over the world as a thief and a scoundrel. If Mr. Galusha will see me we might arrange some way to avoid this disagreeable publicity." Again he shrugged his shoulders. "But your uncle will not see me. I should suggest that you tell him that he is taking a very foolish course, a course which may be dangerous as well as foolish."

"If Uncle Albert won't see you it is because there isn't any truth in your old story!" Kitty flared indignantly. "I don't believe that Uncle Albert knows a thing about that Patesta Raphael!"

"Ask Mr. Galusha if the picture he put away when he knew that I was in his house is not the Patesta Raphael," suggested Mr. Nicola with a very disagreeable smile. "Ask him where he got it and how he got it. It is nothing to me if he lies. But whatever he says you can tell him that we know the truth and that we will put the picture back in the Patesta Cathedral where it should be. Tell him to-day!" And he left her as unceremoniously as he had appeared.

No wonder Kitty could not stay on her rosy mountain top. She had half a mind to disobey Uncle Albert and invade the sacred office and break into the sacred business hours, but Uncle Albert, she remembered, had been very fractious at breakfast. He had eaten scarcely anything, and had complained that the late hours which his young people compelled him to keep were upsetting his health for he had never felt as poorly as he did that morning.

"I ache all over," he said pathetically.

But when Aunt Susanne tried to persuade him to remain at home and let the office take care of itself for a day, he had actually glared at her and said fretfully

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that he would not neglect his business. He was not like the irresponsible young people who would let anything interfere with business. So he had gone downtown, and Kitty did not quite dare to go after him.

She was far too restless and too uneasy to remain at home, so she went on up the street and was picked up by Granny Simmons who took her home to luncheon and kindly showed her pictures of young Peter Simmons from the first baby photograph to the last picture in the uniform of an aviator in the United States Army. Granny showed Kitty also the *croix de guerre* which Peter had won in France and talked of Peter and no one but Peter, so that Kitty had a wonderful day and never once thought of Uncle Albert until she stood in front of his house again.

"Oh, dear!" she murmured impatiently as he bobbed back into her thoughts and dragged her down to the dark blue cañon again. "Oh, dear, I suppose I shall have to tell him what Mr. Nicola said!"

But when she went into the house she found that Uncle Albert's aches and pains were not due to the late hours his young people had obliged him to keep, but to the mumps. Uncle Albert had taken the mumps from George and was shut up in his room furiously disgusted and ashamed of himself. He could not tell any one how ashamed and disgusted he was for his jaws were too sore. He would not have a nurse, and he would not let any one come near him, not even George, who was rapidly convalescing so that he could take a little nourishment again and was deeply interested in what he had given his old uncle.

"No sense in any one else making a fool of himself!" Uncle Albert mumbled painfully. But in spite of his



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orders Bert found his way into his room and after Bert came Aunt Susanne.

"It's part of my work to take care of the sick of my family!" she insisted, when Uncle Albert told her, "For goodness sake go out and shut the door behind you."

When old people have childish ailments they are usually very ill, and Uncle Albert was amazingly lucky to have a light case. He was not half as uncomfortable as he might have been. His isolation gave him an opportunity to think of many things which had been crowded back in his mind by the succession of shocks which his family had given him, but now he could take these things out and think of them in connection with his family.

Kitty—well, the problem of Kitty seemed to be solved. Kitty would marry young Peter Simmons and go west with him to make a home in a box car or a shack. Uncle Albert was glad that he would not be in the home which Kitty was to make, for, so far as he could learn, Kitty knew absolutely nothing about home-making. She only knew how to organize foreign-born women into something. Uncle Albert had never quite understood what Kitty did, for he had never let her tell him. And Kitty planned to continue this work after she was married, for Peter had told her that there were a lot of foreign women, the wives of the miners at the Sure Thing Mine which was near the railroad Peter was building. Kitty talked more of what she was going to do for these foreign women than she did of what she was going to do for Peter. Kitty was a sweet, charming girl; there had been moments when Uncle Albert had had great hopes of her, but now, as he looked at Kitty with a mumpy

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vision, he discovered that he did not understand Kitty at all.

Sybil, Uncle Albert supposed, would marry Arthur Parkyn. At least she had Arthur Parkyn's name on a marriage license. And Sybil knew no more about cooking and sewing than Kitty. Sybil talked of dancing instead of home-making. She seemed to think that she would have nothing to do after she was married but dance. When Uncle Albert had dared—dared!—to hint that housekeeping was a responsibility, Sybil had laughed at him and told him that houses kept themselves now and that she would have an apartment in a building with a good café and a good maid service and her housekeeping wouldn't be any responsibility at all, it would be a pleasure. That was not the way Sybil's grandmother had talked. Her housekeeping had been her glory. Uncle Albert did not care very much if he failed to understand Sybil. Silly, empty-headed, selfish, was the way he thought of her while he had the mumps.

If Vernon—well, Vernon might as well understand at once that Uncle Albert would not have a professional dancer in his family. The idea! Uncle Albert would rather have a violoncello, much as he disliked a 'cello as a companion for a full-grown man. Vernon had been a big disappointment to his uncle, who had thought that if he gave Vernon a place in his sacred office Vernon would show some gratitude and interest, but Vernon had shown nothing but indifference. His mind was not on his work. Uncle Albert knew that any normal young man would welcome an opportunity to be associated with his business, and because Vernon did everything but welcome his opportunity and showed such a decided preference for his music Uncle

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Albert refused to try to understand him. Vernon was not worth the effort.

And George! George had given Uncle Albert the mumps which kept him away from his sacred office, so Uncle Albert felt that he never wanted to see George and his appetite again. He did not care if George ate himself to death. And then Uncle Albert laughed as well as he could, for he thought how George must have suffered when the mumps absolutely refused to let him eat.

Bert—Uncle Albert had begun his experiment with a feeling of impatient contempt for Bert and Bert's views, but now as he had time to recall the many talks he had had with Bert, to review the really excellent record Bert had made at the factory and to remember the tender sweetness Bert had for little Sis and Bud, Uncle Albert discovered that he no longer looked on Bert as a dangerous bomb. Why, Bert was—Bert was really broad, almost as broad as Uncle Albert. There was quite a lot to Bert under his surface foolishness, and Bert's theories had changed since he had been with Uncle Albert, and Bert was man enough to admit it.

"Of course they have!" Bert said, when Uncle Albert told him somewhat triumphantly that the theories he had now were not the ones he had brought with him. "The world changes and a man has to change with it. He can't be stable in a moving world!"

That was the trouble, Uncle Albert decided fretfully, the world would move. Of course it always had moved and always would move, but it had never moved so fast as it was moving now. Change, progress, evolution, that was what had made the world what it was. And he had wanted to make it stand still or at least

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move slower. He supposed he had been foolish to think that one man could stop it. History has produced only one Joshua, and Joshua halted an empty sun, not a world full of people. Undoubtedly his young people had shown him that the real world was very different from what he had thought it was. They had opened his eyes, pulled his old lids wide open. If he wanted to keep his eyes open he supposed he would have to keep his young people with him. An old man could not be progressive by himself. He groaned. He did not want to be progressive. Progress might mean measles and chicken pox as well as the mumps which had kept him away from his sacred office.

Measured by to-day's standards his young people might be all right. They thought so anyway, and he did have to admire their spirit, their independence of thought and action even if he deplored their freedom. Why, he had taken them into his beautiful home and given them every luxury, promised them a fortune if they would live in the luxury, and while outwardly they had done what he requested, inwardly they had gone on in their own rebellious way. They listened to him pleasantly enough and said, "Yes, Uncle Albert," or "No, Uncle Albert," when he had finished, but they continued to do as they pleased. Not one of them had tried to truckle to him. No, his young people might be many things he disliked, but they were not parasites. They stood on their own ground, and he could meet them there or stay on his ground. Not one of them showed any real appreciation of what he had tried to do for them. He had given up his decent, quiet, well-ordered life and they, why, they hadn't given up a thing! What he had had from them he had

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had to buy! How perplexing life was! Uncle Albert thought perhaps he could understand it better if he did not have the mumps.

Kitty was stunned when she heard what Uncle Albert had taken from George and that he refused to allow his family to come near him. Kitty knew that mumps last more than the twenty-four hours, which Mr. Nicola had said would be all the time which would stand between Uncle Albert and the law. What should she do? Should she write to Uncle Albert? No, she would not bother the poor old dear! It was enough for him to have the mumps now. She would wait until he was well before she would say a word to him. She would talk to Bert, and Bert would manage Mr. Nicola. But Bert did not come home for dinner, and she fell asleep before he was in the house. He was gone when she awoke in the morning. Oh, well! she had a few hours more and she must just do the best she could.

Luckily, or purposely, she was not sure which, she met Mr. Nicola the next morning, and he asked her quickly what answer Mr. Galusha had made to the ultimatum he had sent.

"I haven't seen Mr. Galusha," Kitty told him coldly. She had never disliked a man as she disliked this Mr. Nicola who threatened to give Uncle Albert a world-wide reputation as a thief and a scoundrel. "He is ill," she explained even more coldly.

"Ill!" Mr. Nicola did not believe her.

"He has the mumps! He really has!" she insisted. "You can ask the doctor."

Mr. Nicola scowled blackly. It was absolutely contrary to all of his plans for Uncle Albert to have the mumps. "I shall have to extend the time then!" he

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said in deep disgust. "But only until you can talk to him. There must be no unnecessary delay. I shall keep a watch on him."

"My goodness!" murmured Kitty as he went away. "What a very unpleasant man! I wish I knew what to do!"

There was nothing she could do until she could see Uncle Albert. Bert refused to carry any message when she spoke to him.

"If you could see the poor old man you would know that Uncle Albert has enough—all he can stand just now," he insisted. "Nicola won't do anything until he is well and then we shall just have to tell him what we know."

"What we suspect," corrected Kitty. "We don't really know very much."

Kitty was positive she never could have lived through those next few days if it had not been for young Peter Simmons, who was so devoted and so adoring that he carried her completely away from Uncle Albert and his worries. She went to Granny Simmons to dine one evening, about ten days later, and Granny made a fuss over her as young Peter had promised she would. So did Grandfather Simmons. He beamed at her and told her that he was glad young Peter had had the sense to fall in love with her as soon as he saw her.

"I did it myself!" he exclaimed with a wink at Granny. "The night you were here in your pink calico."

"Pink calico!" exclaimed Kitty. She could not remember that she had ever had a pink calico.

"He calls everything calico," explained Granny indulgently. "It is the only material he knows by

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name. Velvet and satin and crêpe are all calico to old Peter Simmons!"

"Of course they are," agreed old Peter Simmons with a chuckle. "I'm not a man dressmaker. You wore pink calico, my dear. That was the night I had those artists here for dinner. Did I tell you, my dear," he turned to Granny, "that they were impostors? The first time in my life my judgment was wrong!" he frowned, as Kitty and Granny voiced a surprised duet: "Impostors!"

"I told you they had fishy eyes and shifty jaws!" exclaimed young Peter. "I told you!"

"And you were right," his grandfather admitted promptly, for old Peter Simmons was such a big man that he never refused to admit that he could be wrong. "They forged a letter of introduction to me. So far as I can learn, they are trying to blackmail American art collectors. I don't know what they thought they could get from me! Yes, I do! Nicola asked me to introduce them to Albert Galusha. I don't know just what their game was but I hear they are crooks."

"I know!" cried Kitty, for in a lightning flash it was all as clear as the air to her. "I can tell you. They claim to be agents of the Italian government hunting paintings which were taken from Italy without the consent of the government. They demand the picture or"—she remembered that Mr. Nicola had suggested that if he could once see Uncle Albert he might arrange some way—"a settlement or a bribe. Why, it is as clear as day to me now!" she exclaimed, her eyes big and full of wonder that it had not been clear long ago. "Uncle Albert is perfectly all right! Mr. Nicola was trying to blackmail him, just as you said, Mr. Simmons!"

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"Uncle Albert? What were they trying to put over on old Albert Galusha?" asked Mr. Simmons.

Kitty told them quickly of the strange picture which had hung in Uncle Albert's gallery and of the strange story Gian Moroni had told about it and the hateful accusation Mr. Nicola had made.

"That was what was bothering you!" young Peter exclaimed as soon as she had finished, and he looked at her with even more admiration than usual. It was such warm and hearty admiration that Kitty flushed. "You loyal old girl!" added Peter fervently.

"But what is the story of that old picture?" asked old Peter Simmons, who found Kitty's tale incomplete. "Is it the Patesta Raphael?"

"I don't know," admitted Kitty forlornly. "Uncle Albert will never tell us a word about it."



## XXV

WHEN Kitty returned home, carefully escorted by Peter as if she were a very rare and precious package, she found that Uncle Albert had been restored to the bosom of his family. They were all in the library and made a charming and domestic picture. Uncle Albert in his big armchair looked smaller than ever. Undoubtedly the mumps had left a mark on him even if he had had a light case. Arthur was beside Sybil on the sofa where they had sat so many evenings, but Kitty never saw him. She never noticed that his face wore a strange expression. Arthur seemed most uncertain whether to look foolish or triumphant. Kitty only saw her Uncle Albert chastened by the mumps.

"Why, Uncle Albert!" she exclaimed in pleased surprise. "How splendid to have you with us again!"

"Humph!" grunted Uncle Albert, as he allowed her to take his hand and squeeze it after she had kissed him. "You weren't here for dinner," he grumbled.

"No, I was at Peter's grandmother's. If I had known you were coming down I shouldn't have left the house. But I'm glad I didn't know, for I have heard the strangest story!" And she quickly told them what she had heard at Peter's grandmother's.

Uncle Albert did not seem especially interested nor especially surprised. Indeed, he yawned twice while Kitty was telling her story.

"I could have told you all that long ago if you had asked me," he said testily, for the mumps had taken the pleasure out of yawning for the time being. "I

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just had a telephone from Maclean and the blackguards have been arrested. They went just a little too far when they threatened me," proudly. "They offered to let me keep the picture for two hundred thousand dollars. Humph! Dirty scoundrels! The one who talked to Bert thought Bert could influence me!" He laughed as scornfully as he could to think that any one thought that he could be influenced. "They had a fine new scheme but it wasn't good enough to fool me. Bert," he turned to Bert, the socialist, "even you can't say they were within their rights, rebel as you are?"

"No, I can't. But all the same, Uncle Albert, I insist that you have no right to that gallery of yours. Those pictures belong to the people!"

"Don't I know it!" snapped Uncle Albert. "And won't the people get them as soon as I have the collection as I want it! I'm not going to wait until I'm dead! But it didn't take socialism to show me what to do with my pictures!" He seemed pleased in an odd sort of way that he had been clever enough to know what to do with his collection without any help from socialism.

"It was your own fault, Uncle Albert, that Bert and I thought there might be something in Gian's story," Kitty told him eagerly. "You were so mysterious about that funny old picture. We were sure it was the Patesta Raphael!" She laughed softly because she had believed Gian Moroni instead of trusting Uncle Albert.

"It was the Patesta Raphael," Uncle Albert said grimly.

"Uncle Albert!" They turned and stared at Uncle Albert.

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"If it is——" began Bert indignantly, but Uncle Albert never let him say another word.

"Of course it's the Patesta Raphael, and I didn't tell you what I knew about it for the very good reason that I had given my word that I would keep my mouth shut. And I don't break my word! When I was a young chap and came to this country to trade with the Indians," he explained irritably, "I met a young priest, an Italian. We were thrown together more or less and several times he helped me out of tight places. Father Patesta was a fine fellow, the younger son of an old Italian family. I might never have been interested in Italian art if it hadn't been for him. About ten years ago he sent for me. He was dying, and he wanted me to take care of an old painting for him. He asked me to hang it in my gallery and keep my mouth shut about it until his brother, the Prince of Patesta, died. It seems the brother was a black sheep and had done his best to ruin his family and his people. He would have sold the picture, but Father Patesta heard of his plans and managed to steal it and bring it to America with him. He covered it with black paint to conceal it and carried it around with him. He believed in the old legend that Patesta would prosper if the picture hung in the cathedral. He begged me to keep it until the rascal of a brother was dead and then send it back to Patesta. He didn't dare send it while the brother lived; he simply couldn't trust him. That's all there was to it. It wasn't much of a story." He was apologetic because there had not been more of a tale. "I don't know how this Nicola heard that I had it, but that's how I got it."

"Why, Uncle Albert!" The family chorus repeated the surprise motif.

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"And you never tried to find out if it really was a Raphael?" asked Bert.

"It wasn't any of my business what it was," declared Uncle Albert with a snap after his old pre-family fashion. "Whatever the picture was, it belonged to Patesta. The night those men came here with Simmons, I had a cable from Rome. You took it, didn't you, Bert?" Bert nodded. He remembered the cable from Rome. There was only one word in the message. "Finished" was all it had said.

"The brother had died!" exclaimed Kitty quickly. "That was what the message meant!"

Uncle Albert nodded. "So of course I went into the gallery and took down the picture. I didn't want any one to see it and question me about it. That night, when Kitty thought I was stealing from my own gallery, I took the picture to my room and packed it, and the next day Maclean took it to the Italian embassy at Washington to send it back to Patesta."

"Uncle Albert!" exclaimed Bert, and he jumped up and went to take Uncle Albert's hand, "I'm proud of you."

"Humph!" grunted Uncle Albert. "We lived socialism in those early days, Bert; we didn't have to preach it!"

"I should have known it was all right," Kitty was pinkly ashamed of her ignorance. "I should have known you would do nothing wrong, Uncle Albert."

"Humph!" grunted Uncle Albert. He agreed with her perfectly. Kitty should have known.

"I think you were wonderful," went on Kitty, "to keep the old priest's secret and restore the picture. But after all I'm glad I was such a silly as to believe Gian's story. If I hadn't I never should have known

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how much you mean to me, Uncle Albert! When I came here you were just old Uncle Albert, but now—now—why you are the head of my family! And I didn't know then that a family is all tied up in one package. Trouble for one member means trouble for all the members, doesn't it?"

"Kitty really was awfully worried!" Peter spoke as if Kitty's worry was something to be proud of. "She wouldn't marry me while she was worrying her old head about you, Mr. Galusha. But we can plan now, can't we, Kitty? You know I have to go back to Montana next week!"

Uncle Albert looked up quickly and a really pleased expression crossed his face. "Do you mean to say that Kitty wouldn't be married because she was worrying about me?" He wanted to be sure that Peter knew what he was talking about.

Kitty squeezed his hand. "Of course I shouldn't! I never thought for a moment, Uncle Albert, that you really were a rascal or a thief. The very idea! But I didn't know what trouble those hateful Italians might make, and I could never leave my family," she laughed tearfully at her family, "while a member of it—the head of it!—was in trouble!"

"You wouldn't?" Uncle Albert was quite touched.

"No, I shouldn't!" she insisted.

"I don't think much of the wedding you will have if it is next week," Sybil said from the sofa where she had been whispering to Arthur. "When Arthur and I are married it will be in the cathedral with a hundred cybotium ferns and thousands of roses and a bishop and a vested choir and a dozen bridesmaids and ushers! Won't it, Arthur?"

Kitty's nose crinkled at the cathedral and the brides-

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maids, and she smiled at Sybil and at Arthur indulgently.

"You may have a show if you want one, Syb. I'd rather be married in a home!"

"Home means something to you now, does it, Kitty?" Uncle Albert looked pleased again. Perhaps Kitty had developed a little bit according to the plans and specifications he had made.

"It does," she confessed honestly. "Of course I know that home is just a word, a state of mind. It isn't any one place. It isn't always a museum like this," she looked around Uncle Albert's beautiful library, "nor what Peter and I will make out of a box car. It is really any place, and you have to make it yourself. You can't buy it nor borrow it nor beg it. You have to make it yourself out of love and hope and sacrifice!" Her voice shook as she gave them the receipt for making a home.

"Mostly sacrifice," yawned Vernon, who thought all this talk about homes was pretty poor twaddle.

Kitty crinkled her nose at him. "You'll learn some day, Vern, just as I did," she promised. "Some girl will teach you as Peter, and Uncle Albert," she was good enough to include Uncle Albert among her teachers, "taught me. Your experiment was a big success with me, Uncle Albert," she told him jubilantly. "I expect it's been a big success with all of us. Aren't you glad? I'm actually glad that I'm going to be a home-maker!" She laughed softly because she was so sure that Uncle Albert would be glad with her.

But Uncle Albert only snorted. "Home!" he grunted. "I'd like to see the home you'll make! You can't cook! You can't sew! You don't know anything about housekeeping!"

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Kitty looked startled and hurt, and she answered him humbly instead of defiantly as once she would have answered him.

"Perhaps I don't know all of those old-fashioned things, Uncle Albert, but women have an instinct for home-making. You may sneer all you please but the home Peter and I will have will be all right. It's funny, Uncle Albert, but you seem to think that your idea is the only right idea. Don't you know that there are as many homes as there are kinds of people? I wouldn't want your home, and I suppose you wouldn't want the one Peter and I will have, but it will be heaven just the same!" She blushed adorably as she described to Uncle Albert the home she and Peter would have.

"You bet it will!" agreed Peter, and he looked volumes of indignation at Uncle Albert who had hinted that it would be something else. He caught Kitty's fingers and held them tightly as he stood beside her.

They were so sure that they exasperated Uncle Albert, or perhaps it was the lingering effect of the mumps which made him snort fiercely when Kitty told him triumphantly again that his experiment had been a huge success, it had made her ready for a home of her very own.

"It hasn't been a success at all!" he exclaimed. "It's been a nightmare! I haven't known a comfortable moment since you came into the house. I've been scared to death for fear the twins would have the croup and die here, that Bert would blow up the gallery, that Sybil and Kitty would run away, that Vernon would marry a dancer and that George would eat himself to death! You came here and upset my quiet, decent life. You didn't do much that I asked you to

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do. You told me I was old-fashioned and ignorant. You believed, almost believed anyway, that I was a thief and a scoundrel. You've made me feel as old and as useless as Methuselah, and as if I didn't know beans! I should say it has been a nightmare! You even gave me the mumps!" He glared at them as they stared at him in shocked amazement. "It hasn't been a success at all, and if I had my way it would end to-morrow!"

There was a stunned silence for a moment, and then Bert asked quickly, eagerly: "Do you mean that, Uncle Albert?"

"You bet I mean it!" grunted Uncle Albert from the very high horse on to which he had climbed. And to show them how much he meant it and how indifferent he really was to them, he opened the evening paper which was folded on his knee. His family had had so much to say to him that he had not had a chance even to glance at the headlines. "You bet I mean it!" he repeated as he turned the sheet. "You can all leave to-morrow, if you want to. I'll be glad to break the contract and give you what I promised you for the chance to go back to my old decent life. What—what's this?" he cried as he saw one headline. "What the devil's this?"

Kitty ran to see. So did Sybil and Vernon. Bert stood up and looked over Uncle Albert's shoulder.

"'Galusha Named. Socialists and Suffragettes Unite on New Art Commissioner,'" he read, and then laughed. He had to laugh for he knew very well what Uncle Albert thought of the socialists and suffragettes. "I guess it means gratitude," he chuckled. "The socialists and the suffragettes are going to give you something for what you gave them, Uncle Albert," he



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said when he could stop laughing. "They want the mayor to appoint you on the new art commission."

"Socialists and suffragettes!" repeated Uncle Albert as if the words left a very bad taste in his mouth. "It's an outrage!"

"It's a compliment!" declared Kitty, and her eyes twinkled.

"Such impudence!" muttered Uncle Albert. "I shan't take it!"

"You told me yourself, Albert," Aunt Susanne said in her gentle voice, "that you knew more about art than any man in Waloo. If that's true you haven't any business to refuse."

"It is true!" Uncle Albert was indignant that she should have questioned his knowledge. "And I should like the job, it belongs to me. But I don't like to be indorsed by socialists and suffragettes. I do know more about art than any man in Waloo!" He looked at them as if he defied them to name a man who knew more.

"Then why on earth don't you take the commission if it is offered to you?" asked Kitty. "It is an awfully important job now with the war memorials to plan. It's silly to refuse it, Uncle Albert! What do you care about socialists and suffragettes?"

"I don't care anything about them," admitted Uncle Albert. "Not now. I used to be afraid of reform but I've had to learn, perhaps you taught me," he admitted it grudgingly, "that reform means progress. The world isn't what it was in my day, so perhaps the experience I've acquired isn't as valuable as I thought it was. You young people will have to work out your own salvation!"

Six months ago Uncle Albert would have died before

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he would have made such an admission. They could not believe he was making it now, and they stared at him as he went on, a bit drearily, for, looking at it one way, it was a confession of failure.

"Perhaps I was wrong when I said my experiment wasn't a success, for if it hasn't influenced you it has taught me. But I've learned enough!" he told them fiercely. "And I'm going to let you off the rest of the year. I shan't run the risk of catching anything more, whooping cough or socialism or anything. I'll send George to a vacation camp. Perhaps a man who works with boys will understand his appetite. Kitty can be married here if she wants to be, so can Sybil. Vernon, you can go back to your 'cello. You aren't any earthly good at the office. And Bert—Bert will go back to his *Beacon* and tell one-half the world to blow up the other half," scornfully.

"No, I shan't!" Bert exclaimed impulsively. "I'll go back to the old *Beacon*, of course, but I shan't preach revolution any more. It's toleration the world needs now, Uncle Albert. Toleration! I shall miss our talks," he added kindly.

"I'll miss them too," said Uncle Albert. "But we can still have them even if we aren't under the same roof. I shall hope to see you on Christmas and holidays," vaguely. "I'll miss you!" There actually was a wistful note in his voice. "I'll miss you all. You know I li—" he stopped and gulped and hurdled the hated word bravely. "I love you! I'm your great-uncle!" he bristled as if he had to have a reason for loving his young relatives. "I have to love you!"

"And we love you!" declared Kitty, leaving Peter alone and dashing over to squeeze Uncle Albert's hand. "Not because you are our great-uncle, but be-

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cause you are such a darling duck!" And she kissed the darling duck on the top of his bald head.

"That's very gratifying!" Uncle Albert was a delicate mauve, his own particular blush. "Yes, I'll miss you. I'll keep Sue, if she'll stay and behave herself." He smiled at Aunt Susanne.

"I'd rather stay with you in Waloo than go back to Manitou by myself!" Aunt Susanne wasted no time in choosing between the city and the country. "I'll be glad to stay."

"I'll miss you all!" Uncle Albert repeated and there was something very pathetic about him as he sat there in his big chair. "But I'd rather miss you than have the responsibility of you any longer. The mumps were the last straw! I'm too old! And anyway I can't really help you. Whether I approve of your way or not I've discovered that it is the way of your generation. You can do with it what you please!" He waved his hand in renunciation. "The world is yours!"

"Oh!" gasped Kitty. "That's true, Uncle Albert! Peter," she turned to Peter as he stood beside her, "Peter, Bert, Vern, Arthur, Sybil," she called the roll eagerly. "The world is ours! What are we going to do with it?"

Peter slipped his arm around her. "The best we can, honey! It's the only thing!"

"Do with it?" Bert threw back his head and laughed. "We'll do exactly what other generations have done! What Uncle Albert and Aunt Susanne did. When the time comes we'll turn it over to our young people, to little Bud and Sis, and we'll call them wild young rebels and tell them they are sending it to the dogs. That's what we'll do! Uncle Albert was a

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wild young rebel to his parents, we're wild young rebels to Uncle Albert, and some day Bud and Sis will be wild young rebels to me! Won't they, Uncle Albert?"

"They will!" prophesied Uncle Albert.

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**THE END**



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